

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Structure

11 Now

when Job's three friends
heard of all this **adversity**
that had come upon him,
they came each one
from his own place,
Eliphaz the Temanite,
Bildad the Shuhite
and Zophar the Naamathite;
and they made an appointment together
to come to sympathize with him
and comfort him.

12

When they lifted up their *eyes* at a distance
and did not *recognize* him,
they raised their voices and wept.
And each of them
tore his robe
and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky.

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.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky. 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. [Job 2:1-13]

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

See sentence structure.

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. Three Comforters Arrive (2:11-13)

A. Job's Adversity is Made Public (11a)

B. Three Friends Arrive from Afar (11)

1. Their Names

- a. Eliphaz the Temanite
- b. Bildad the Shuhite
- c. Zophar the Naamathite

2. Their Reaction (12)

- a. They Saw
- b. They Raised their voices
- c. They Wept
- d. They threw dust into the air

3. Their Compassion (13)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Job's calamity becomes known

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): and three friends travel to be with him.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Three friends come to comfort Job in his affliction.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: True friends care enough to simply be there.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Weeping With Those Who Weep

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

There are scene shifts in this extended prologue. The first scene is on earth, 1:1-5, giving us a preview of this man named Job and his family. Then the scene shifts to heaven in vv. 1:6-12. Back to earth in vv. 1:13-22; Back in heaven in 2:1-6. Back to earth in 2:7-13. That brings us back to the extended dialogues between Job and his friends that dominate the rest of the book all the way up to chapter 42.

Earth to heaven

<=== 2 cycles

Earth to heaven

Back to earth (balance of the book)

Another way to look at it (reproduced from Talbert, 36):

The prologue divides naturally into four parts, each signaled by a repeated transitional phrase.

“There was a man . . .” (1:1-5) introduces the reader to Job.

“Now there was a day . . .” (1:6-12) informs the reader of the proceedings of the divine counsel in heaven.

“[Now] there was a day . . .” (1:13-22) recounts the earthly impact of that divine counsel, namely, Job’s possessional losses and his response.

“Again there was a day . . .” (2:1-13) relates the second divine council and its impact on Job’s personal suffering and response.

VERSES 11-13

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky. 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.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

11 Now when Job's three friends—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite—heard about all this adversity that had happened to him, each of them came from his home. They met together to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they looked from a distance, they could barely recognize him. They wept aloud, and each man tore his robe and threw dust into the air and on his head. 13 Then they sat on the ground with him seven days and nights, but no one spoke a word to him because they saw that his suffering was very intense.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

11 When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. 13 Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place,

Not to imply these were Job's only friends (cf. Elihu who appears later). These were likely three wealthy men, like Job.

“Friends” in the O.T. (esp. in t/Wisdom Lit.) is much stronger than our contemp. word. (cf. FB “friends”). Cf. Prov. 18:24.

I take it that these 3 friends were true friends with good intentions. Lesson: even good friends let us down. Cf. 16:2: “miserable comforters.” They, like Job’s wife, have suffered from perhaps too harsh an evaluation. Not “the three stooges” as some may have referred to them.

May have taken months for them receive the news of Job and make the trek to where he lived.

Eliphaz the Temanite,

Eliphaz came from Teman. Genesis 36:4 records a son born to Esau and Adah named Eliphaz. In turn, Teman was born to Eliphaz (Gen 36:11). Teman came to be the name of a prominent city in the area of Edom southeast of the Dead Sea.⁵⁴ If the identification of this and Job’s location is correct, it meant for Eliphaz a journey of over a hundred miles. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 69.]

Teman was 1 of t/most imp. towns of Edom (Jer. 49:20; Amos 1:12; Oba. 9). One of t/sons of Esau is called Eliphaz (Gen. 36:4). He is described as the firstborn of Esau (Gen. 36:15). But we don’t know if this is the same person.

Edom was known for its wisdom:

Obadiah 8 “Will I not on that day,” declares the LORD, “Destroy wise men from Edom And understanding from the mountain of Esau?”

Jeremiah 49:7 Concerning Edom. Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Is there no longer any wisdom in Teman? Has good counsel been lost to the prudent? Has their wisdom decayed?”

Would the worldly wise bring comfort to Job?

Bildad the Shuhite

Bildad came from Shuah. The name “Bildad” does not occur elsewhere in the Bible.⁵⁵ “Shuah” is the name of a son of Abraham by his wife or concubine Keturah (Gen 25:2; 1 Chr 1:32). Otherwise that name is unknown. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 69.]

Shuah is one of Abraham’s sons by Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6).

and Zophar the Naamathite;

Zophar came from Naamath. His name also is unique to the Book of Job,⁵⁶ and the place he came from also is unknown. Etymologically it means “pleasant,” an appropriate name for a city or area. As with Job’s name and home, we have little information about families or places of residence. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 69.]

Naamah appears in Gen. 4 as t/daughter of one of Lamech’s wives (Gen. 4:22).

and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him.

“Comfort” = nacham. There’s sympathy and comfort, which are two diff. things. Comfort is active.

12 When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky.

Town trash heaps were often higher than the surrounding area and I picture Job sitting on a mound of rubbish where he could be seen more easily from a distance.

But they did not recognize him. His appearance and his countenance. Cf. seeing someone for the first time who has suffered greatly and is physically declining. Cf. Isaiah 53.

They tear their robes (1:20) and throw dust into the sky, both signs of extreme mourning. Dust speaks of mortality and death. God says to cursed Adam, “You are dust and to dust you will return” (Gen. 3:19). Joshua and the elders of Israel tear their clothes, fall to the ground, and put dust on their heads after the disaster at Ai (Joshua 7:6). The Israelite who reports the capture of the Ark by the Philistines comes to Shiloh with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head (1 Sam. 4:12).

“To throw dust in the air (toward heaven) so that if falls on their heads is vividly to identify themselves in their grief with Job’s dead children and probably also with Job himself, who has been grasped by death and is already being dragged down into the realm of the dead.” [Ash, 61]

Wept = wailing (Psa. 6:8). Romans 12:12.

Develop the picture...

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.

On the ground, not on a stool or on a tree stump. They were at Job’s level. The closest one can get to Sheol.

Lamentations 2:10 The elders of the daughter of Zion Sit on the ground, they are silent. They have thrown dust on their heads; They have girded themselves with sackcloth. The virgins of Jerusalem Have bowed their heads to the ground.

Then silence. 7 days and nights of silence. Ecc. 3:7.

Different interpretations of this silence (see Ash, 62):

“If for the most part Job’s friends got things wrong . . . here, at the beginning, they do it right.”

“Here is genuine friendship. Here is deep ministry.”

“The compassion of silent presence.”

“Their silence is a further evidence of their genuine empathy.”

“They do honor by profound silence to his vast grief.”

“They are true friends, bringing to Job’s lonely ash-heap the compassion of a silent presence.”

Saul ==>

1 Samuel 31:13 They [loyal city of Ramoth-Gilead] took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days..

Jacob ==>

Genesis 50:10 When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he [Joseph] observed seven days mourning for his father.

Note the loneliness of suffering.

“The most tragic, sublime, and beautiful expression of loneliness which I have ever read is the Book of Job.” [Thomas Wolfe, *The Anatomy of Loneliness*]

“Job in his awesome aloneness foreshadows another believer, an even greater man who endures an even deeper suffering. This believer too was with his dearest friends, in a garden outside Jerusalem. He told them to sit and wait while he prayed. He took with him his three closest friends ‘and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.’ He said to them, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.’ He went on a little farther, fell on the ground, and prayed ‘with loud cries and tears.’ But when he came back he found them sleeping. ‘Could you not watch one hour?’ he asked sadly (Mark 14:32-42; Hebrews 5:7). He prayed and wept alone. And the next day he suffered alone, stripped of his clothes, robbed of his friends, with even his mother having to keep her distance from the cross. He had said to his friends that although they would leave him alone, he was not alone, ‘for the Father is with me’ (John 16:32). But in the deepest intensity of his suffering he cried out in anguish, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Mark 15:34). As the old hymn puts it, ‘He bore the burden to Calvary and suffered and died alone.’” [Ash, 63]

“Near where I live in central London there used to be a bronze statue of a local man sitting on a bench overlooking the River Thames. A few meters in front of him is a bronze figure of a little girl, his daughter who had died in childhood. As he sits, in old age, his imagination plays tricks with him, and it is as if he sees his little daughter alive and playing there. That pair of statues always moves me to tears.” [Ash, 57]

Job a living martyr; a dead man yet alive. Such is the nature of intense suffering.