

Job

Dr. Charles “Buddy” Parrish
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Job 2:9-11



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Vss. 9-10

- Out of no where, Job's wife suddenly appears. For all the discussion in Ch. 1 about his children and all he possessed, there was nothing about his wife. How she survived the tragedies of Ch. 1, we do not know. Who is she and what role does she actually play in the story?
- The Targums, the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible, calls her Dinah. The “Testament of Job”, written sometime around the birth of Christ, calls her Sitis. The early church Father, Chrysostom, suggests that Satan preserved her to torment Job, leading St. Augustine to simply call her “the adjutant of the Devil”!
- God points out to Satan in 2:3 that despite all Satan has thrown at Job to make him suffer, Job has not cursed God to His face and the man still holds fast to his integrity. Here, Job's wife acknowledges the same thing. But whether it is that she hates to see Job suffer or that she believes it is ridiculous to maintain one's faith and integrity in light of all the devastating losses, she calls on Job to do as Satan believes he will: curse God to His face and receive the consequence, to be struck down by God and die. A sort of theological means of suicide to put an end to the suffering.
- Surely being offered a way to end the suffering would be a temptation. But Job did not fall into the trap. Rather, while sitting in the ashes with his sores, he fires back at her, saying she sounds like “one of the foolish women”. Her suggestion may have seemed reasonable, even logical, but Samuel Terrien points out that “faith offered to him a reason higher than human reason”. The same word used here for “foolish” is used in Psalm 14:1, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” Job discovers the sanity of faith out of the insanity of human wisdom.
- And note that Job does not call her a fool, only that she is speaking like foolish people. Indeed he tries to reach her in her suffering to help to see what he sees, to help her understand why he will never let go of his faith and integrity. He asks her, “Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In this life, as we accept God's blessings, do we not also know that evil may likely come as well?
- So in this moment, two key things have happened. First, Job's character is set. He has closed the question on what is the human motive for faith and worship and it is NOT profit and it is NOT driven by a mercenary spirit as Satan would believe. Second, Job's faith has completely defeated Satan.

The Adversary has been thoroughly knocked back to his corner, so much so that he does not appear in the story again. Job neither sinned with his lips nor in his heart and Satan was defeated.

Vs. 11

- Verse 11 marks a major turning point in the story, for it is here we are introduced to Job's three friends whose ongoing conversation and council with Job make up a large portion of the story. This conversation will contrast the "Shame or Honor" wisdom of Eastern philosophy with faith in God. Word had come to them in their own respective regions of the terrible tragedy that had fallen on Job. They arranged an appointment to meet and go together to see Job and comfort him. Recall that Job had been one of the wealthiest men in all the Middle East and his fall was one that had to be seen to be believed. But who were they?
- Eliphaz the Temanite. Eliphaz may carry the meaning, "God is fine gold". Teman was a city in Edom and was renowned for its wisdom. In Jeremiah 49:7, God asked, "Is there no longer any wisdom in Teman? Has good advice been lost by the prudent? Has their wisdom decayed?". So as the conversation takes shape, Eliphaz may represent the wisdom of the South, especially given that Teman literally means South. Of the three, he may be both the oldest and most prominent. He speaks first and throughout the story his speeches carry great weight and show original thinking. We will see in 5:7 and 15:17-19 that the wisdom of Teman values maturity of thought and experience.
- Bildad the Shuhite. Bildad could mean "Beloved of the Lord". He was of the tribe of Shuah, who was a son of Abraham (Genesis 25:2). These may have become nomads who migrated in the southeast of Palestine, but archeological sources place a city named Shuhi as an Aramean region on the Euphrates. Bildad thus represents the wisdom of the far east. John D. W. Watts points out that his speeches are not much different in content from Eliphaz, but they are much more vehement.
- Zophar the Naamathite. His name has no clear known meaning. It could be a variation of "twittering bird" or "sharp nail" or even "goatlike jumper". Naamah is probably the Jebel-el-Na'ameh in northwestern Arabia. The LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (also known as The Septuagint), written around the 3rd century BC, calls Zophar "the king of the Mineans", who were Semitic people in southern Arabia. Watt argues that Zophar was the most impetuous of the three, dogmatic, intense, passionate to the point of being reckless. He was the first to accuse Job of some hidden personal wickedness and rebukes Job for presuming to search for the unsearchable secrets of God.
- These three represent the major philosophical views of faith, Good vs. Evil, and humankind's relationship to God. Theirs is a very different understanding of those things than that which Job has learned from the God of Abraham and Isaac.