

04b JOB

Let's pick up our study now in Job chapter 2, at the point that Job has responded to his wife, and to be fair, Mrs. Job of course takes a bad rap for encouraging him to curse God and die. But it is interesting that in this one line, you talk about a walk-on part, I mean she's got one line in the whole 40-odd chapter book, she repeats in the latter half the same words of Satan, curse God, but in the first half of her little speech, she echoes the words of God. And in Hebrew, it is not so much a question as it is a statement.

The idea is, you still hold fast to your integrity, curse God and die. And she's not questioning, she's acknowledging that he still holds fast to his integrity, and so she sums up in a single line the dialogue between God and Satan. You hold fast to your integrity, why don't you curse God and die? And it's a beautiful piece of poetry on the lips of his wife, and you can't buy that kind of literature, you have to get it out of the Bible.

So Job is there, and he says, you speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Very tactful I think, that most of us have trouble when we're under pressure maintaining our tact and our perspective. I admire this statement like I admire Stephen, asking God not to lay this sin to their charge or the Lord Jesus looking down from the cross saying, Father forgive them.

And you find out whether you really have been transformed in the soul or whether you still need further work when you are hurting and aggravated and irritated and under a lot of mental pressure and somebody comes up and says something that you could, I mean Job could by rights take issue with his wife over coming and pestering him when the chips are down, and he is very tactful and it's a model and it's convicting for a lot of us that personal irritation is no excuse for impatience or being discourteous or thoughtlessly wounding someone that is in your near periphery. Job is a great model in this as he is in many other things. He says you speak as one of the foolish women, I can't think of a more mild form of rebuke as Job scrapes another shard full of goop from his skin and he says, you know, I've heard foolish women speak like that, I mean it's just the most mild form of reproof.

He says shall we indeed and he uses it, he expresses the truth, he speaks the truth in love and this is what we are supposed to do and this is the mark of a believer who has matured, a believer who is on the inside as they are on the outside and this is the goal to which we attain and to which we look and hope to attain and which we often find that we have not yet attained. You speak as one of the foolish women speak, shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity, in all this Job did not sin with his lips. One of the reasons Job did not sin with his lips is he is a man of few words and it is a fact that the fewer words you speak the less likely you are to sin with your lips and it is a quality greatly to be desired as James points out to be able to bridle the tongue, to be disciplined in what we say and it is one of the hardest things especially for some of us to master is control of the lips.

A hasty word, you can read about it in the Proverbs, they do a lot of damage and you can instantly regret them but it is too late. If you just had the discipline to wait until the word of God in your soul could kick in and keep you from saying something stupid and that is the challenge, it is a challenge more so for some of us than others but as they say you cannot unring the bell. Now verse 11, this is the fascinating section, I have been translating this out of Hebrew all week and I am just fascinated, I hope I can do it justice.

Now, when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they raised their eyes from afar and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept, and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven.

So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great. Now when Job's three friends heard, the word here for friends, I need to give you the Hebrew letters for it. It is Re'eh, it's R-E-E-Y.

The Hebrew letters are Reish, Ayin, and Yod. Reish, Ayin, and Yod. The Ayin, remember we have the word for sea, which is Reish, and an Aleph, and that's kind of the good letter, Ra'ah, to C-R-A-A-H, and then we have the word for evil, which has the evil Ayin, it's Reish, Ayin, and Hey, and you have Ra'ah, which is evil.

Well interestingly, the word for friend here is Reish, Ayin, and the Yod that's on the end of that is actually the possessive, it's the masculine plural construct here, but the same root as the word for evil. Now it says, when they heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, when they had heard of all Ha-Ra, so the Re'eh here of the Ra'ah, and it's spelled almost exactly the same way. Ha-Ra is Reish, Ayin, and Hey, and this is the evil, the calamity, the disaster, the disaster, that had come upon him, and when something comes or goes in Hebrew, the verb is Bo, and this is the word that talks about the evil that has come upon him, and so when they heard that all of this Ra had come upon Job, the Ra decide to come to Job, and so you have the same subject and the same verb for the evil that came upon Job, and the friends that came upon Job, if you will.

They're both Reish, Ayin, and they both Bo to Job, and this does not Bode well for Job in the poetic sense. The evil came upon him, and now the friends that are spelled almost exactly the same way are going to come to Job as well. So, it's a really neat piece of word play in Hebrew, that after all of this, we were expecting another scene in heaven, where perhaps the stakes would be accelerated even more, and instead, what we see are the friends coming to Job, and this is what's going to accelerate the situation even more, because what have we just been told? In all this, Job did not sin with his lips, but he's only made two statements, right? Once the friends come, Job is going to be statement-making for 30 chapters and more.

So, if there is a time when Job is going to let loose of his integrity, it will be during these

dialogues. It's very possible that Job could sin with his lips in this case. So, the friends, the Ra, come to Job, having heard that the evil, Ra, has come to Job, each from his own place.

Eliphaz the Temanite. You recognize the first part of that name, Eli. Jesus spoke this from the cross, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.

Aramaic, Hebrew, it's virtually the same. My God. And the last part of this name is Paz.

Some think that this means my God is fine gold. Remember the gold from Uphaz? Well, this is Eliphaz, and you get the idea that this is the God from Uphaz, or the God of the highest quality gold, fine gold. It is more likely I think that this is from a different root, and it has the idea of my God is compassion.

Eliphaz the Temanite. But before we finalize the meaning of his name, let's take a look at where he is from, and what these two words tell us. Eliphaz the Temanite.

These are the Edomite names. This is the clearest link to Edom, or Esau. The name Eliphaz is one of the sons of Esau.

He is, in Genesis 36.15, it says the chiefs of the sons of Esau, the sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn son of Esau, were chief Teman. So, Eliphaz is the son of Esau, and the grandson of Esau is Teman. So, Eliphaz the Temanite, Teman becomes actually a region in Edom.

It's the hereditary land of this grandson, one of the chiefs, or one of these fiefdoms, if you will, sort of a feudal area. These chiefs, this is why they are called chiefs in Genesis 36.15. Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz. These are going to be Kenazites, they are going to be Zephites, they are going to be Temanites, they are going to be Omarites, or Omrites, in these different areas of the land of Edom.

And so, Eliphaz is going to be one of these hereditary names that are going to be passed down. So, he is manifestly a descendant of Esau, and from the most prominent of the sons of Esau, the firstborn, Eliphaz. And he is named for the firstborn son of Esau, so you really can't miss it.

He is Edomite through and through. And, the second name, Bildad HaShuhi, actually, Bildad HaShuhi, Shuah is not found in the Old Testament as a place name, but Abraham has a son by Keturah, by this name, Shuah. Abraham, chapter 25 of Genesis, took a wife, her name was Keturah, she bore him Zimron, Jokshon, Midan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

So, this is the youngest of the named sons of Abraham. We know that he had quite a few descendants through Keturah, but the youngest son of Abraham with Keturah is Shuah. So, this is a patriarchal connection.

It's early, fairly early, but once again, this is outside the line, this is not connected to Isaac, it's not the line of promise. Esau is not the line of promise. The Edomites, Eliphaz, the Temanite, is a

brother to Esau.

Esau is the brother of Jacob. Now, we have Shuah, who is the half-brother of Isaac, just like Ishmael. And, similarly, he is prominent, but not in the line of promise, not in the line of the chosen people.

Bildad, his name is interesting because the last part of it, the D-A-D, seems to be from the same root that David's name comes from, which is dude or Dawid. That D-D or D-U-D formation has the idea of love. Here in Genesis 25, the passage right before us, when it talks about Midan, Midian, and Shuah, and then you have Sheba and Dedan.

The Dedan there, once again, you have that double D infix. These names all have this idea of love or being beloved, Midad. You take the concept of love, which is D-D, and put an M in front of it to make a noun out of it, and beloved is the result.

So, these also, and Dedan seems to later wind up having some Edomite connections as well. So, they seem to be neighbors in the Arabian desert area there of Edom and these other descendants of Abraham. We find this out in the information in Genesis 25 is repeated in 1 Chronicles 1.32. So, two very strong Abrahamic connections.

Finally, after Bildad the Shuahite, by the way, the beginning of that Bildad has been variously construed and it seems to actually be something related to Ben, like son of the beloved, or it doesn't have the noon in it. They really have a hard time figuring out what some of these names mean, but the parts that we can decipher are intriguing and the connections that they have to the patriarchs are, I think, the most important. Because you think about the early Israelites who heard this story, what would they connect it with? They wouldn't connect it with David.

They would look back to their oral history and the tradition that they had and the knowledge that was still relatively fresh generation-wise of Abraham and his descendants and who their cousins were amongst the peoples in the surrounding regions. So, they know who the Edomites are. They know who the chiefs of the Edomites are.

They know who the sons of Abraham were by Keturah, who are sort of their competitors and who they view as being sort of outside the promise because it's not Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. So, that's, I think, the main idea here, even more so than the meanings. The third friend here is Zophar the Naamathite.

Zophar, you may not realize it, but you have come across this name a time or two before. What was Moses' wife's name from Midian? Zipporah. It's the very same root.

Zippar or Zephar is a word that comes from the Hebrew it's a verb actually in ancient Near Eastern, you know, proto-Hebrew and the Shemitic language family in Hebrew and its cognates. It has the idea of something which goes to and fro and it comes to mean or that flies around and

it came to mean bird. So, it's sometimes translated sparrow.

If you put D-E on the end of it and you have Zephar-deh, these are frogs. These are the plague of frogs in Genesis because they hop around in the same way that birds fly around but that Zephar is in the root of the name of frogs. So, it has the idea of, you also have Zophir, T-S-A-P-H-I-R, which is the word for he-goat.

And what's the impression of a he-goat? They leap from rock to rock just like frogs leap and just like birds flit and fly or move about. So, this is the word for he-goat. It also comes to, it's used rarely for something which is braided.

Remember when people have this little saying about how you tie your shoes and you talk about the, I forget what it is, something is chasing the rabbit and the shoelace goes around. Well, when you would braid or plate something like a wreath or a crown, they thought of it as something diving in between something else and this dives in and this dives in as you're braiding. So, there's a Zephar that is translated as a crown in a couple of places.

Anyway, this is Zophar, Zephora, of course her name has the idea of being a sparrow or a bird. Zephar is used of birds, birds of prey and so on. And the Naamathite part of his name also has the same type of connections in and around Edom.

There is a Naama up in Judah near Lachish. You have it mentioned in Joshua chapter 15 verse 41, but that's probably not a region that's being referred to here. There is also a prominent Naam who was the son of Caleb, Caleb the son of Jephunneh, Caleb and Joshua.

One of his sons was named Naam in 1 Chronicles 4.15. And some people, it's a complicated genealogy, that by the way is the same section that talks about Jabez and the prayer of Jabez. Right after that you have the descendants of Caleb listed. But Kenaz is also in there and Kenaz, it seems as though there were some Edomites who intermarried into the tribe of Judah.

We know that there were both Moabites and Edomites that came in. Ruth is a Moabitess and evidently Kenaz, some kind of way the Edomites got infiltrated into the Judahite genealogy and you see that in 1 Chronicles 4. Well why do we care about all this? Think about it. Where do we find the book of Job, the story of Job? It's in the Hebrew Bible.

It predates Moses and the Exodus. It fits obviously after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob because these men and their provenance is from descendants of Esau, descendants of Abraham through Keturah, but it is pre-Mosaic law. But these men are all outside the Abraham, Isaac, Jacob patriarchal umbrella.

They are outside the camp of what will become Israel and yet they are godly men and they are men of faith and they are men of doctrine, the word of God as it has been passed down to them. This is fascinating because God is working in and through a great believer who is not an Israelite

and the story and the book is presented to the Israelites to teach them something. What does God say later on in the latter prophets? With another tongue, by a foreign people, I will speak to you Israel.

I'm going to have to teach you and it is ultimately fulfilled when the age of Israel stops and the age of the church begins and I will make you jealous by a people who are not a people and before the nation of Israel forms, here is God using someone who is outside Israel to teach important truths about himself to the incipient nation. After the nation of Israel forms and fails and falls, he is going to do the same thing with those who are outside the patriarchal line, although these men can all claim descendancy from Abraham, but they are closer to being Arabs than they are to being Jews, if you want to look at it that way. It is an interesting perspective to think of the early Israelites reading this story, looking at the family connections of these men and realizing that they are not descendants of Isaac and they are not descendants of Jacob, they are descendants of Keturah and they are descendants of Esau and they are Edomites, almost entirely.

All of these seem to be Edomite connections to a greater or lesser degree. So, by the way, the Septuagint changes Naama to Minian or something, it switches the N and the M around and there is a Minian region in Arabia, but it is like a thousand miles, it is way down, you might as well be down in Sheba again. I think the best way to look at these is to first of all recognize their Edomite connection and secondly look at the meaning of the names.

I mentioned before that God is fine gold for Eliphaz, but most likely it is, some have suggested God is agile because there is a noun pazaz that means to be gymnastic in some form, but there is an old Arabic cognate that indicates this probably means God conquers, my God conquers, my God reigns, my God rules, my God overcomes. And that is a great suggestion in the light of this story. Bildad has the idea of the love of God and then finally Zophar, reminiscent of Zipporah, there is also a fellow mentioned in Numbers chapter 22 verse 2, Balak, remember when he hires Balaam, well he is Balak the son of Zipporah, Balak the son of Zophar, and he is of course a Moabite, so you have this sort of Moabite, Edomite connection.

There is a Zepho who is a grandson of Esau, son of Eliphaz, brother of Teman, so all of these names have significance, the idea of God overcoming, the idea of love, and the idea of this going to and fro, things flitting about, leaping about in a somewhat unpredictable manner. You don't know which way a frog is going to leap always, you don't know which way a bird is going to fly always, and so even in these names I think there is a suggestion that God is sovereign, God is loving, and the plan of God is unpredictable to mortal eyes, and I think in the names of these three friends they are not accidental, and that this comes out of left field for Israel so to speak, that this story comes from Edom is fascinating because they have to credit it, it's a part of their literature, and no one can deny the inspiration of it, I don't say no one can deny it, but I don't think anybody in their spiritual mind can deny it, and recognize that there is the wisdom of God in it, and yet it is a teaching point that comes from the outside. It's interesting because if you look, and

you might want to write these references down, Jeremiah chapter 49 verse 7 suggests to us that in the ancient world, in these times, Edom was renowned for its wisdom.

You know how later on in Daniel's day the Chaldeans were the guys with the big reputation for wisdom, well in these earlier days it was the Edomites who were considered to be the wisest, and it's possible that part of it is because of this story, but in Jeremiah 49 verse 7 it says, against Edom, thus says the Lord of hosts, is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished? Because of course this is a woe song against Edom, and it's talking about well, here's everything they're renowned for, has it in fact gone away? Obadiah 8, will I not in that day, says the Lord, Edom even destroy the wise men from Edom, and understanding from the mountains of Esau? So this seems to be their renown, their claim to fame. We also have the apocryphal book of Baruch. You know Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe, and there's some apocryphal literature ascribed to him.

Baruch 3, 2, and 3 has the same idea. We don't have to credit that since it's not inspired. But Edom seems to have been renowned for wisdom.

So the Moabites and the Edomites both are just outside Israel, and so Israelite people when they come to this story, they're not trying to figure out well, was God working within one tribe, or is there some part of the law that Job violated? This story is just outside the border of their bloodline, just outside the border of their law, just outside the border of the covenant promises and so on, and it's sort of a clean room for the analysis of this issue. There are no distracting connections to Israel. If you've ever read rabbinic literature and Talmud and Mishnah and particularly the Targums, I'll give you a little bit of Job commentary from the Targums here in a little bit.

But it can be very fanciful, and they'll seize on the smallest detail and say, oh well this is how it happened, this is why it happened. And this story has been sort of antiseptically removed from Israel so that nobody can say, well God never did like the tribe of Benjamin or some such thing, or well look, he transgressed in this point of law. It's free of all of that.

Well, these friends have come and it says they have made an appointment together. This really is a verb that means to meet together. And you think well they've come, these friends almost seem like the catastrophes that came previously in that they are separated and they come together and come to Job all at once.

The lightning striking, the burning of the sheep and the servants, the whirlwind, the carrying away of the camels and so on, the oxen and the donkeys, and the seed for the next planting and all that happened in widely diverse places, but it all came together and one servant is hard on the heels of the other when they're reporting the news. These friends are scattered and they come together before they come to Job. They meet together to come and mourn with him and to comfort him.

You might take special note of mourn with him and comfort him. And keep your finger here and turn over to the end of the book, Job 42 and verse 11. At the end of all of these comments, at the end of the dialogue and the speech that God makes, when Job is restored, all his brothers, all his sisters and all those who had been his acquaintances before came and ate food with him in his house and they consoled him and comforted him.

The very same two Hebrew words, for all the adversity the Lord had brought upon him, all the evil, the *raah*. So early on it is these three friends, later on it's going to be Job's brothers, sisters and his acquaintances from the past to do the very same thing, to come and mourn with him and to comfort him. Now, there are formal ways of consoling people in the ancient world.

Their purpose is to console and comfort. And the comfort seems to go beyond just saying, oh, they're there. The word actually means to nod your head and it means to have sympathy or empathy with someone.

And the idea of comfort is, in fact, the very same word when you go to Isaiah chapter 40, comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem. And it means to do something substantial for someone.

In 42, you'll notice that the brothers and sisters, when they come, they each bring a piece of silver and a ring of gold. And so the idea of comfort, I think it's more like what you see today when someone is bereaved or whatever and someone brings food, someone says let me take care of your pets, let me babysit your children, let me take care of something in a substantial way. It means to act in some fashion to ease someone's discomfort.

And that's exactly what it means in Isaiah 40 and other passages. So they have come, they want to see what they can do. That's their intention.

We will mourn with him, we'll nod our heads, we'll sympathize and empathize and let's see what we can do. Let's see what sort of substantial help we can offer. So, then in verse 12 it says, when they raised their eyes from afar and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept.

Very same phrase as when Abraham is going to the mountain to sacrifice Isaac and he says he lifted up his eyes and saw the mountain afar off. Lifting the eyes is a phrase that is pregnant with meaning in the Bible because you're looking visually but lifting the eyes it has this implication, this spiritual connotation that you're making an evaluation of something at a little bit higher level. So they raised their eyes.

Now this seems sort of contradictory. They're raising their eyes from afar and they don't recognize him. Well, you wouldn't expect to not recognize someone from afar, would you? It's when you get close and you still don't recognize someone.

That would be shocking but you wouldn't really expect from a distance to be surprised that you

don't instantly recognize someone. But the idea here is they are going to Job's place. This to me is one of the arguments that perhaps he's not outside the city but he's actually near his own dwelling.

The fact that his wife speaks to him, I don't think she was in on a shopping trip or that she walked outside the city to rail at him. But they come to the place where they have seen Job in the past. They are friends.

They are acquaintances. They live at some distance. They have assembled together and they all come together.

And while they are still a good ways off, they look toward Job and they actually do recognize him. If they didn't recognize him, they wouldn't lift up their voices and weep. It says they raised their eyes from afar.

They did not recognize him and then they lifted their voices and wept. Well, they can only be crying and weeping because they do know that that's Job. But he bears no resemblance to what they have always seen before.

He has changed. He has no form or comeliness as in former days. When they look at him, they can't believe that's the same Job.

This is the connotation. He has been transfigured. He has been transformed in a negative way by all of these calamities and by his current skin affliction so much that he bears no resemblance to his former self.

And it is so shocking that they weep and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. Now you figure, how do you do this? You are sprinkling dust on your head but it's toward heaven. How do you do that? You get handfuls of dirt and you throw them in the air over you and it rains down on you.

And you don't know exactly where any given particles are going to hit. This is like, what has happened? They throw it up to heaven and it falls down on them and they are covered in this dust. They tear their clothes and this of course is sympathy.

It is mourning with. And they are also shocked to see the status. This is a common reaction in the ancient world to indicate mourning and so on.

The voice of weeping you find in Psalm 6, 9. Depart from me all you workers of iniquity for the Lord has heard the voice or the sound of my weeping. Isaiah 65, 19. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people.

The voice of weeping or the sound of weeping shall no longer be heard in her nor the voice of crying. Weeping is a vocal activity. These men cry out and wail.

They are not just sobbing with a little tear running down their cheek into their beard. This is wailing like you see in the Arabic world. It is vocal.

It is histrionic. Lifting up the voice is not in speech but in wailing. Tearing the garment.

We have already seen Job do this. And the throwing of the dust toward heaven. It is a well attested rite of mourning in Joshua 7, 6. Remember when they were defeated at Ai and Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening.

He and the elders of Israel and they put dust on their heads. 1 Samuel 4, verse 12. A man from Benjamin, you remember after Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas take the ark into battle.

A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. 2 Samuel 13, 19. Tamar, already mentioned after she is violated by her brother Amnon, puts ashes on her head, tears her robe.

Chapter 15 of that same book, 2 Samuel 15, 32. When David, Hushai the archite comes to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. Ezekiel 27, we saw this.

They will make their voice heard because of you. They will cry bitterly and cast dust on their heads. They will roll about in ashes over and over again.

We find it in Esther, we find it in Daniel chapter 9, rolling in the dust, putting dust on one's head is often a sign of mourning. But in none of those passages do we find this word Zaraq, Z-A-R-A-Q used for sprinkling dust. The only time ashes or dust are sprinkled is that we find this taking place is Moses when he took dust and sprinkled Zaraq.

Remember the plague of boils? The plague of sore boils? That's Zaraq. Moses took the dust and threw it up in the air and it became boils on humans and animals in Exodus chapter 9. So it's an interesting connection that Job is afflicted with sore boils and these men, although evidently this is pre-Moses, there is something about why does Moses pick up dust and throw it up and when it comes down it seems to become sore boils. I don't know what the connection is but you can't deny that they see Job covered with these boils, he's disfigured, and they throw dust up in the air using this unique word, this sprinkling, and it's the very same word used of Moses throwing dust in the air that becomes boils.

Well, what is the upshot of all of this? This is a new test. One of the things we see from the structure of this narrative and the vocabulary that is used in particular in this section is this is yet another test. It's not formally introduced like the first two but things tend to come in threes in the Bible.

Three is the number of divine perfection and so you have three friends coming, this is the third onslaught so to speak, by these three friends and they represent in their names and in their

origins something coming in to reflect the character of God. God is sovereign, God is love, but God does unpredictable things and all of this is going to come out in these subsequent dialogues and it's a reminder to us that our faith has to be in that which is not seen. What did Jesus say about us? You believe, Thomas, because you've put your hand in the nail prints.

Blessed are those who, not having seen, believe. And you can see Jesus looking beyond Israel to the church in that and that's where we are and we are like Job in the sense that God is working through us and we are not the chosen people of Israel and yet we have a unique and special place in his plan and it's important for us to trust him just as Job did. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

We'll pick up in chapter 3 next time. Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress it on our hearts.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.