

The Book of Job
Session 11: Scene in Heaven, Part 2
By John Walton

This is Dr. John Walton and his teaching on the Book of Job. This is session 11, Scene in Heaven, Part 2.

Introduction to Second Scene in Heaven [00:23-1:21]

So now we move to the second scene in heaven. Job has lost all of his possessions, his sheep and cattle, his camels, his oxen, his sons and daughters. Everything that he has is lost. And so again, we have a conversation between Yahweh and the Challenger. There in chapter 2, verse five. No, I'm sorry, verse three. "Then the Lord said to the Challenger, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There's no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright,'" the same kinds of things he said the first time. "And he still maintains his integrity though you have incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." Okay.

Incite [1:21-4:31]

Now I want to look at that phrase a little bit. We want to look at the use of this verb "to incite" in Hebrew. It's the root "*sut*." And for those of you who have a little Hebrew, it's the Hiphil form, which is sometimes causative. But here, sometimes, it occurs with an indirect object and sometimes without. Here the subject is the Challenger. The verb, of course, is "incites." The direct object is Yahweh "you have incited me," and the indirect object is Job "against him to ruin him." So, we have three parties involved in the sentence, the Challenger and Yahweh, and Job

There are three other places in the Old Testament that use the verb in that kind of context. One of them is in 1 Samuel 26:19. There the subject is Yahweh; the object is Saul; that is, David is talking to Saul and says, "if Yahweh has incited you against me." So, David is the indirect object.

In 2 Samuel 24:1, it's Yahweh or his anger that incites David to take a census. Okay. He's inciting David against Israel. So there, Yahweh is the subject; David is a

direct object, and Israel is the indirect object. In Jeremiah 43:3, Baruch is the subject who incites Jeremiah, the direct object against Israel. I'm sorry, Jeremiah is a direct object; Israel's the indirect object. So, we have three other places besides Job 2:3, that use this verb and that have this setup that has a subject and a direct object, and an indirect object.

Now, if we examine those, we can learn something about usage and how it works. The incited action is always negative for the indirect object. Okay? The incited action is always negative for the indirect object though it's not intrinsically a sinful or evil action. After all, sometimes Yahweh is the one who's inciting. So, it's not intrinsically sinful or evil. In Job, as a direct object, Yahweh is accountable for the action against Job though the Challenger, as the subject, has influenced his decision. Job, as an indirect object, has no knowledge of the Challenger's role as the subject. He only understands Yahweh's role. He's the direct object. The Challenger incited Yahweh against David; I'm sorry, Job.

Without a cause [Hinnam] [4:31-6:24]

So, it is used in 1:9, when the Challenger raised the question about whether Job served God for no reason, that's this word *hinnam* "for no reason." So, he's incited him for no reason. So that's used in 2:3. It was also used in 1:9 about whether Job served God for no reason. So, does Job serve God for no reason; now, the Challenger has incited Yahweh against Job for no reason. It's the same Hebrew word *hinnam*.

This can refer to something done in vain. For instance, in Ezekiel 6:10, or something done unnecessarily as in 1 Samuel 25:31, or even something done without compensation, Jeremiah 29:15. And of course, that's the meaning in Job 1:9 that it's done without compensation. In most cases, it refers to something done without a cause, that is, undeserved treatment. And here would be passages like 1 Samuel 19:5 or 1 Kings 2:31.

So, we've got the scene set for us where this statement has been made by Yahweh. "You have incited me against him for no reason." Now, there we find out that God is not pushing responsibility or blame off on the Challenger. The Challenger has

incited, but that's not an intrinsically evil thing to do. But that's what's happened. And again, Job will know nothing of the Challenger's role, nothing whatsoever. It's never told to him.

Difference between the First and Second Heavenly Scenes [6:24-7:18]

So, what's the result of this second round? In this second round, we have a little bit of a difference. The first round took away all the positive things, prosperity. The second round adds a negative. Here we get the physical suffering. So, the idea, and this is presented by the Challenger, the idea is, well, anybody can stand when they lose all their stuff, but when you start putting them in pain, now it's going to show. And so, God gives permission for that as well. So, this second round is different because it adds physical suffering. The first round brought mental anguish associated with loss and grief and the second brought physical problems associated with pain.

City Dump: Expelled and Ostracized [7:18-8:18]

The skin disease that Job exhibits would have led to him being expelled from the city and ostracized. We really can't give a medical diagnosis of it, but skin disease was treated that way in the ancient world; that's cause for being ostracized. And so, he's expelled from the city, and he ends up at what the text refers to as the ash heap. This is like the city dump. It's not only garbage that was dumped there; it's dung that is dumped there. Job ends up sitting out at the city dump. It shows how low he's gone. He's been reduced this far. So, it's not just mere ashes that make it bad; that's not near bad enough to describe the situation he's in.

Rhetorical Strategy [8:18-9:19]

So, what's the rhetorical strategy of this second scene in heaven? It assures that Job has every opportunity to abandon God if his only motive for faithfulness is to gain benefits. Again, now he is not only suffered loss. He is suffering pain. It makes sure he has every chance to abandon God, to find out what his motives really are. Tolerating pain

is different from tolerating loss. So, this scene escalated, and Job's situation became worse yet.

So, it's in that context that he encounters his wife and his three friends. And we're going to deal with the role that they each have and his responses to them in the next segment.

This is Dr. John Walton and his teaching on the Book of Job. This is session 11, Scene in Heaven, Part 2. [9:19]