

The Book of Job

Session 11: Scene in Heaven, Part 2

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Abstract

In this session, Dr. John Walton transitions to the second heavenly scene in Job chapter 2, where Yahweh and the Challenger discuss Job's continuing integrity. Walton analyzes the Hebrew verb *sut* (to incite) and the adverb *hinnam* (for no reason/without a cause) to show that God accepts full responsibility for Job's ruin without attributing evil to the Challenger. The session details how Job's trial escalates from mental grief to physical pain and social ostracism at the city dump. Ultimately, Walton explains that this rhetorical strategy tests the purity of Job's motives, ensuring he has every opportunity to abandon God if his faith was merely transactional.

Outline

I. Introduction to the Second Scene in Heaven (Job 2:1-3)

A. Transition to Chapter 2

1. Job has already suffered the total loss of possessions and children.
2. The second heavenly council meeting begins with a similar dialogue between Yahweh and the Challenger.

B. Yahweh's Proclamation

1. God reiterates that Job is unmatched on earth, blameless, and upright.
2. Yahweh notes that Job still maintains his integrity despite being ruined without a cause.

II. Linguistic Analysis of "To Incite" (Hebrew: *sut*)

A. Grammatical Structure of the Verb

1. Derived from the Hebrew root *sut* (Hiphil form, sometimes causative).
2. In Job 2:3, the sentence structure features three parties: the Challenger (subject), Yahweh (direct object), and Job (indirect object).

B. Comparison with Other Old Testament Passages

1. 1 Samuel 26:19 - Yahweh (subject) inciting Saul (direct object) against David (indirect object).
2. 2 Samuel 24:1 - Yahweh or His anger (subject) inciting David (direct object) to take a census against Israel (indirect object).

3. Jeremiah 43:3 - Baruch (subject) inciting Jeremiah (direct object) against Israel (indirect object).

C. Theological Implications of sut

1. The resulting action is always negative for the indirect object, but inciting is not intrinsically sinful or evil since Yahweh is sometimes the subject.
2. Yahweh remains accountable for the action against Job, even though influenced by the Challenger.
3. Job remains completely ignorant of the Challenger's role; he only experiences Yahweh's actions.

III. Linguistic Analysis of "For No Reason" (Hebrew: hinnam)

A. Textual Connection

1. Used in Job 1:9 regarding whether Job serves God "for nothing" (without compensation).
2. Reappears in Job 2:3 describing God being incited against Job "for no reason" (without cause).

B. Semantic Range of hinnam

1. In vain (e.g., Ezekiel 6:10).
2. Unnecessarily (e.g., 1 Samuel 25:31).
3. Without compensation (e.g., Jeremiah 29:15).
4. Without a cause / undeserved treatment (e.g., 1 Samuel 19:5, 1 Kings 2:31).

IV. Escalation to Physical Suffering and Social Ostracism

A. Shifting from Loss to Pain

1. The first round removed positive blessings (prosperity and family).
2. The second round adds negative experiences (severe physical suffering).
3. While the first round caused mental grief, the second round introduces physical pain.

B. The Reality of the Skin Disease

1. The disease cannot be diagnosed medically, but in the ancient world, skin conditions led to immediate banishment.
2. Job is expelled from the city and ends up on the "ash heap."
3. The ash heap represents the city dump, which contains garbage and animal dung, symbolizing Job's extreme humiliation.

V. Rhetorical Strategy of the Second Round

A. Testing Motives

1. Suffering pain is different from tolerating loss; it provides a harsher test of Job's devotion.
2. Assures Job has every opportunity to abandon God if his faithfulness is based on expected benefits.

B. Transitional Setting

1. This extreme suffering establishes the context for Job's upcoming encounters with his wife and three friends.