

Comments About Job 2:11–13

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By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss the book of Job. There will be times when we talk about (1) a group of chapters, (2) one chapter and (3) a portion of a chapter. Today, we will discuss Job 2:11-13.

I hope this project encourages you to review the valuable history and lessons found in the book of Job.

Two trials

In the first two chapters of the book of Job, we read about two trials that came upon Job and his wife.

In the first trial, Satan asked God for the freedom to “touch all that he has” (Job 1:11).

In the second trial, Satan asked God for the freedom to “touch his bone and his flesh” (Job 2:5).

Following both trials, Job’s initial reaction was exemplary (Job 1:20-22 and Job 2:10).

What was Job’s sin?

At this time, I want to mention that Job’s positive reactions did not endure. When I state this observation, I am not saying these words to criticize Job. In fact, I find Job’s reactions to be normal.

Anyone who is quick to condemn Job should remember a few verses that appear later in the Bible.

At a later time when talking about a different situation, the Son of God said: “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first” (John 8:7).

In the message given by the Son of God that is often called the “Sermon on the Mount,” he said: “Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:3).

Here are two verses that give succinct statements about Job’s sin.

■ The servant Elihu said: “Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain; he multiplies words without knowledge” (Job 35:16).

At the end of the book of Job, God is recorded as confronting Job with two presentations—Job 38-39 and Job 40-41.

■ God began his first confrontation by asking: “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2).

In future articles, we will discuss these statements in greater detail.

Bad influence

As we continue our study of the book of Job, we will recognize that the three friends who came to help Job were a bad influence.

(Although the serpent in the Garden of Eden was a bad influence, Adam and Eve were held accountable for their decision.)

Notice what God said about the three friends.

Job 42:7—“And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.’ ”

What they did right

What do the words at the beginning of this article have to do with Job 1:11-13?

Although the rest of the book of Job reveals the negative role that the three friends played in their relationship with Job, the fellows started out setting a good example.

- The three friends came to mourn with him and to comfort him (Job 2:11).
- When they saw Job, they wept and approached God (verse 12).
- They sat down with Job for seven days and seven nights—without saying a word to him (verse 13).

The problems started when they opened their mouths. Their words were not helpful.

Here is a valuable lesson: When seeking to help someone who is suffering and mourning, we can do more good with our empathetic actions (listening and serving) than we can with our words.