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<sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>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.

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1. We three friends

- a. 3 friends of Job heard of his plight, so decided to pay him a visit to console him
  - a1. The friends were from different areas, but they knew each other, so decided to come together as a group
  - a2. The time of their visit probably was weeks after Job's latest afflictions
- b. Several aspects may be inferred about these friends
  - a1. They were true friends of Job who wanted to provide comfort & relief
  - a2. They were prominent people of the east
  - a3. Their actions when they arrived showed that they were genuine in their concern for Job
  - a4. Their subsequent criticism of Job was probably a genuine attempt to move Job to repent so that he could be healed of his affliction
  - a5. Eliphaz is an Edomite name, possibly from the city of Teman
  - a6. Neither Bildad or Zophar are known outside of Job, though Shuah in Mesopotamia may have been Bildad's home

2. Shock & grief

- a. Before the 3 approached Job they could see how miserable & unrecognizable he was

- b. They did the 4 things that extreme grief required of them in their culture
    - a1. Loud crying & anguished mourning
    - a2. Tearing of robes in humiliation
    - a3. Throwing dust in the air to land on their heads in disgrace
    - a4. Sitting in silence with the afflicted person
  - c. Sitting in silence for 7 days was the customary display of grief & respect when mourning the dead (Gen. 50:10)
    - a1. This does not mean that they thought that Job was going to die
    - a2. This was their way of empathizing with Job's grief & pain (a show of genuine concern)
  - d. They saw that Job's grief was very great (by sharing in his grief they tried to bring a measure of comfort)
  - e. There are 2 levels of shared grief
    - a1. That which custom & courtesy demands as part of a cultural norm (obligatory)
    - a2. Personal genuine concern for the grieving party, whereby one shares grief & suffering
  - f. The intent of the friends was to identify with Job in his agony, but they end up causing him more grief
3. A grief observed
- a. There are several ways to add to another's grief:
    - a1. Incessant talking to detract from the pain (often due to your discomfort in situation)
    - a2. Minimizing another's pain by telling stories of your own experience with suffering (the *I know what you are going through* approach)
    - a3. Ignoring the grieving person
  - b. The 3 friends started out well
    - a1. They expressed proper concern & sorrow
    - a2. They sat in silence with Job among the ashes to demonstrate their care for him
    - a3. Their presence would have been a comfort
  - c. When Job finally spoke he indicated what he needed from them, but they end up condemning & not caring
  - d. Comfort is the art of presence & not presumption