

Job finally gets his audience with God, Who informs him that he has been talking about things he knows nothing about. God shows Job how small man really is compared to Himself and that He owes no man an explanation for the things He does. This passage should humble anyone who believes that God should seek their counsel on how to administer the universe.

Job 38

¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ² Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind [tempest; storm]” – Job had stated that he wished that God would speak to him and explain the reason for his suffering (Job 31:35 “*Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.*”). Now God does answer him from out of the “whirlwind.” The Hebrew word for “whirlwind” refers to a tempest or storm. Clouds, thunder and lightning are often associated with God’s presence in scripture.

“and said, Who is this that darkeneth [to dim; hide] counsel by words without knowledge [perception; understanding]?” - Job, as well as his friends, have been speaking about things that they don’t understand. We human beings are prone to express our opinion on things that we know nothing about and thus “darkeneth counsel.” Instead of shedding light on a situation we make it darker and confuse the issue with our opinions based on our feeble understanding and misguided ideas.

“Gird up now thy loins like a man” – In those days men wore robes and when they needed to do something that required physical exertion (like running, fighting, working, etc.) they would bind up their robes so their movements would not be encumbered. To do so “like a man” means to do so courageously. God is telling Job that he needs to get ready because what God is going to require of him will be a challenge.

“for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me” – God is going to ask Job some questions and then Job will be required to answer if he is able. The intent of the questions are to show Job how insignificant he is as a man when compared to God and how little he truly understands.

⁴ Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. ⁵ Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

God begins asking Job the series of questions. If Job is unable to answer these questions why should he think he’s qualified to advise God? Like Job, sometimes we think God should have done things differently as if He should have consulted with us before acting.

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding” – Job had not yet been born when God created the earth, which makes the point that Job is a mere mortal with a relatively short lifespan. He therefore could not have participated in or served as an advisor during the earth’s creation. I always have to laugh when I watch science shows on TV and they declare with authority that certain things happened millions or even billions of year ago because I know they weren’t there. They can only guess at what they think happened in the past based on their flawed interpretation of the incomplete evidence. Their interpretations are flawed because they are typically based on the assumption that the universe exists only through natural forces without the need for a creator.

“Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?” - God is using the metaphor of building a house to describe the creation of the earth. A carpenter measures his building materials (“laid the measures” and “stretched the line”) as he cuts and fastens them in place when building a house and so God asks Job if he knows anything about how this was done during the creation of the earth.

⁶ Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; ⁷ When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

“Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof” – Continuing the building metaphor, God shows that Job obviously has no understanding of what the foundations of the earth sit upon or anything about who/how the “corner stone” of the earth was laid. Today we have a better understanding of these things than Job but we human beings still understand very little about how the earth was created.

“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” - Apparently angelic beings in heaven celebrated the creation of the earth. Not only is Job inferior to God and not present at the creation, but he is also inferior to the angels who were present at that time.

Job 38:8-39:30: God continues to ask Job questions about the creation, testing his understanding of how things work as well as Job’s ability to manage the creation as God does.

Job 40:1-5: God asks if anyone who disagrees with Him has the qualifications to instruct Him. Job responds briefly and admits that he has no answers to the questions that God has asked and that he realizes how small and insignificant he is.

Job 40

⁶ Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ⁷ Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

God is not finished and tells Job to get ready for the next round of questions.

⁸ Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

“Wilt thou also disannul [break; frustrate] my judgment [decision]?” - Would Job go so far as to annul or override the decisions that God has made? It would be arrogant indeed for someone to believe that they knew better than God about what should be done and could override His decisions.

“wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?” - Perhaps even more arrogant would be to condemn God by saying He acted unrighteously and thereby imply that their righteousness was superior to God’s. If you disagreed with something that God has done, would you say or imply that He was wrong and you were right? To do so would be both arrogant and foolish.

⁹ Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? ¹⁰ Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

“Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?” - The arm was a symbol of strength. Does Job think he has strength like God? Does Job’s strength give him a thunderous, intimidating voice like God’s?

“Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty” – If Job’s strength is equal to God’s, then let him clothe himself with majesty and excellency like God’s and cover himself with glory and beauty as God does. Job should be able to do away with the boils he has, restore everything he’s lost and clothe himself with glorious majesty if this were true.

¹¹ Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one *that is* proud, and abase him. ¹² Look on every one *that is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. ¹³ Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in secret. ¹⁴ Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

“Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one *that is* proud, and abase [to bring low; humble] him” – If Job has strength like God’s then he should be able to do as God does and express his wrath against those who are proud and arrogant against him and humble them.

“Look on every one *that is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place” – God is able to deal with the proud and wicked and so Job should also be able to do so if his strength is like God’s.

“Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in secret” – God is able to humble the wicked so that they fall prostrate in the dust as well as “bind their faces in secret” (may mean to cause them to hide their face or perhaps imprison them – maybe in hell?), so Job ought also be able to do this if he has strength like God’s.

“Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee” – If Job can do all these things then God will agree that Job is able to deliver himself out of the sufferings he’s enduring. But of course, Job is unable to do this. His desire in previous chapters has been to speak to God so that he could convince God to deliver him from his troubles.

Verses 15-24: God continues by calling on Job to consider “behemoth,” a powerful animal which God created. Since translators could not identify the animal mentioned they instead used an English transliteration of the Hebrew word. There have been many theories on what “behemoth” is, such as an elephant or a dinosaur. God’s point appears to be that He created this animal that is more powerful than a man, so Job’s strength obviously pales in comparison to God’s.

Job 41

¹ Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord *which* thou lettest down? ² Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

God now talks about “leviathan” which is another unknown animal whose name is transliterated from Hebrew to English. Suggestions for the identity of “leviathan” include animals such as a crocodile, a whale, or even an aquatic dinosaur. The dinosaur seems to come closest to fitting the description found throughout this chapter, although the ability to breath fire (vs. 19-21) seems to be beyond any natural creature. God asks Job if he is able to pull such a powerful creature as leviathan out of the water as if he were catching a fish on a hook. This is something that God can do but Job obviously cannot.

³ Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft *words* unto thee? ⁴ Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? ⁵ Wilt thou play with him as *with* a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

“Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft *words* unto thee?” - If a fish could talk when you pulled him out of the water on a hook it might plead with you to set it free and talk kindly to you. God is powerful enough that leviathan would plead with Him and so He asks if Job is also powerful enough to have that effect on leviathan.

“Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?” - Is Job powerful enough to make a binding agreement with leviathan to serve Job in exchange for his freedom? Of course Job has no such influence over this powerful creature.

“Wilt thou play with him as *with* a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?” - Can Job tame leviathan and turn him into a plaything? Is he able to bind leviathan for the entertainment of “his maidens” (female servants or daughters)?

Verses 6-34: God continues describing the powerful nature of leviathan, speaking of various characteristics and behaviors that cause men to fear it. The point seems to be that God is powerful enough to create and control such a powerful creature as leviathan, while men fear and are unable to control it. Man’s strength and understanding are insignificant when compared to the strength and understanding of God.