

God's First Speech to Job Begins

Job 38:1-38

Job 38:1-3 - *"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: ² 'Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?' ³ Now prepare yourself like a man. I will question you, and you shall answer Me."*

Background Notes

In the dialogues of the book of Job, we come now to God's reply to all the speeches. After reading the long speeches of Job's four counselors (Job 33-37), it's with a sense of relief that we finally hear counsel from the Lord Himself about Job's situation. The most amazing thing about the Lord's counsel to Job is that He doesn't answer Job's questions about why he is suffering. In fact, the Lord doesn't even mention Job's suffering!

In Job 38-41, the Lord gives two speeches, and after each speech Job is given a chance to respond. God's first speech is in chapters 38 and 39.

In Job 38:1 the Lord answers Job from the midst of a stormy whirlwind. We don't know if Job's four friends can hear what God is saying to Job, but they certainly are aware of God communicating with Job in the windstorm. In fact, they probably thought God was coming to judge Job for his claims of innocence, and maybe even take Job's life. After all, a windstorm was the means by which the lives of Job's children were taken.

In any event, the Lord confronts Job by saying, *"Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"* In other words God says, "Who do you think you are? Your questions and comments only serve to cloud and confuse matters. You're not clarifying anything. If you think you know so much, get ready! Prepare yourself for a real workout! You've questioned my ways. Now I'm going to question you!"

Doctrinal Point

In His first speech, God questions Job about the physical world.

In His two speeches, God will ask Job more than **seventy questions!** God's questions are designed to lead Job (and us) to take a properly humble position before Him. God is the Creator. We are only creatures. How dare we question any of God's ways?

Job 38:4-7 - *“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”*

In verses 4-7 God questions Job about the foundation of the world. God would ask the same questions to those scientists today who don't recognize God as the Creator. “Were you around when I created the world, and hung the earth in space?” The unbelieving scientists weren't there - yet they defiantly claim that they know for sure that everything came out of nothing, by means of a “big bang.” (Talk about kissing your brains goodbye!) It's much easier and much more logical to believe in the great Designer – the Creator God of the Bible!

A significant truth about angels is taught in verse 7. God refers to them as the “*sons of God*” (as we saw back in Job 1-2). Notice - at Creation, **all** the angels shouted for joy! All creation was in beautiful harmony. If **all** the angels sang at Creation, clearly the fall of Lucifer had not yet taken place. Satan walked in the Garden of Eden in his unfallen state (Ezekiel 28). Perhaps it was the creation of humans in the image of God that triggered Satan's pride and jealousy.

Job 38:8-11 - *“Or who shut in the sea with doors, when it burst forth and issued from the womb; ⁹ when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band; ¹⁰ when I fixed My limit for it, and set bars and doors; ¹¹ when I said, ‘This far you may come, but no farther, and here your proud waves must stop!’”*

In these verses we see God's sovereign control over the waters of the earth. God asked Job, “Who separated the land from the seas? Who established the ocean boundaries? Who controls the waves of the sea?” I wonder if the disciples thought of these questions when the Lord Jesus calmed the great storm on the Sea of Galilee!

Job 38:12-15 - *“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, ¹³ that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? ¹⁴ It takes on form like clay under a seal, and stands out like a garment. ¹⁵ From the wicked their light is withheld, and the upraised arm is broken.”*

In verse 12-15, God questions Job about the control of light and darkness. God alone can bring the morning light to dispel the darkness so that we can see details. When the sun rises, even the details on a clay seal stand out (v14). Notice how God uses the light to “*shake out the wicked*” – exposing those who love the darkness to do their evil deeds.

Job 38:16-20 - *“Have you entered the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in search of the depths? ¹⁷ Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death? ¹⁸ Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this. ¹⁹ Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, ²⁰ that you may take it to its territory, that you may know the paths to its home?”*

God continues: “Job, what about all those unseen realms? You don’t have a clue about unseen things, let alone know how to control them. But I do!” And God continues to question Job further about his lack of knowledge about light and darkness (v19-20).

In verse 21 God speaks to Job with great irony: *“Do you know it, because you were born then, Or because the number of your days is great?”* I suspect Job’s attitude was already beginning to change, but God continues to question him.

Job 38:22-30 - *“Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail, ²³ that I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? ²⁴ By what way is light diffused, or the east wind scattered over the earth? ²⁵ “Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water, or a path for the thunderbolt, ²⁶ to cause it to rain on a land where there is no one, a wilderness in which there is no man; ²⁷ to satisfy the desolate waste, and cause to spring forth the growth of tender grass? ²⁸ Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? ²⁹ From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth? ³⁰ The waters harden like stone, and the surface of the deep is frozen.”*

Next God asks questions about weather that Job can’t answer. Notice in verse 23 (as we saw in Job 37) that God uses weather to make the land productive, but He also uses it to subdue His enemies. As Psalm 148:8 says, *“Fire and hail, snow and clouds, stormy wind, fulfilling His word.”*

Job 38:31-33 - *“Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion? ³² Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs? ³³ Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth?”*

Now God questions Job about the stars and constellations. God created the stars, and He controls their amazingly precise movements as well. As Colossians 1:17 says, *“In Him all things hold together.”*

Job 38:34-38 - *“Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that an abundance of water may cover you? ³⁵ Can you send out lightnings, that they may go, and say to you, ‘Here we are’? ³⁶ Who has put wisdom in the mind? Or who has given understanding to the heart? ³⁷ Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven, ³⁸ when the dust hardens in clumps, and the clods cling together?”*

In verses 34-38 the Lord returns to questions about the weather. Job is further humbled as God asks him, “Can you control the weather?” (v34). Here again we see that God uses drought to fulfill His purposes (v38). In His omniscience, God not only knows the number of clouds and lightning bolts around the earth at any given moment, but in His omnipotence, He can speak to them - and they obey! In His first speech, God questions Job about the physical world.

Practical Application

Don't ignore the "weather factor."

In Proverbs 3:5-6 we are told, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and don't depend on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path."*

In this chapter we've seen that God controls the weather, and He uses it not only to make the land productive, but also to accomplish His purposes, programs, and plans. This refers to lands and nations, and it certainly is refers to individual people as well.

Does God ever use weather to direct our paths? Yes, He does! *"He works all things after the counsel of His will"* (Ephesians 1:11). Does that include the weather? Of course! He may use severe weather forecasts of hurricanes or blizzards to direct or change our decisions. And He may bless us with good weather for our church picnics! Don't ignore the "weather factor"!

Here's a rather amusing illustration. When we moved from the Chicago area to Rhode Island, we prayed about the extra finances we would need to make the move. About 3 weeks before our move was scheduled, a sudden severe hailstorm hit the Chicago area, and our vehicles were damaged. There was no mechanical damage, but every part of the car bodies received multiple hail "dings." As a result of the extensive damage, our insurance provided several thousand dollars for repairs - and we weren't required to use the money to repair the damage! We could do whatever we wanted with that money, so – the insurance money paid for our move! Thank you, Lord! And after our move we discovered that the unfixed hail dings wouldn't subtract from the eventual trade-in value of the vehicles! (Again, praise the Lord!)

God used a hailstorm to help with needed finances for our 1000-mile move to Rhode Island!

So - don't ignore the weather factor!