

LEARNING ABOUT GOD WITH JOB

A few years ago I began a study of Job with a friend that got sidetracked when she became seriously ill. I've yet to do a complete study on the book of Job, but some of my favorite scriptures are the last few chapters of Job in which God talks about Himself. In fact I love to read beginning with Job 38-42 and then jumping over to Isaiah 40→ and just meditate on my LORD.

In the next series of blog posts I am going to start with an overview of Job and then spend some time taking a closer look at these wonderful passages. What does this have to do with prophecy? The validity of believing the prophecies revealed in the scriptures is predicated on the character of God. The more we understand about the power and authority of Almighty God, the more importance we are encouraged to place on His words—prophetic and otherwise.

Job 1:1 "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."

The first verse of Job opens by identifying Job as a God-fearing man who lived in the land of Uz. Many posit that Job was not a real person, but other scriptures affirm the truth of his existence.

Ezekiel 14:14 "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD."

James 5:11 "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

I thought it was interesting to note that fearing God and hating evil were mentioned hand-in-hand. Those who truly fear God will hate what He hates, and scripture is clear in declaring that those who fear the LORD will hate evil.

Proverbs 8:13 "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."

Proverbs 16:6 "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."

We are told that Job was a wealthy man who had a large family. In fact, he was recognized as the "Bill Gates" of his day in the land of the east.

In testimony of his fear of God we are told that he made daily sacrifices for each of his children. Are we as diligent in daily prayer for our children? Our actions always reveal the true priorities in our lives.

Job 1:6-8 "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou

considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"

Now we get to the part of Job that is so pertinent to our understanding of spiritual warfare. It seems that there are regular times that the angels come to appear before the LORD. More interesting is the fact that Satan attends at least some of these meetings. According to scripture, Satan accuses believers before God "day and night."

Revelation 12:10 "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Even more interesting is the fact that God calls Satan's attention to Job as one of His most devout servants; in fact, He describes Job as without equal on earth.

What really strikes me is the civility and calm with which God speaks to him. He knew the end from the beginning when He brought up Job to Satan. He knows that Job will pass the test and that his faith will be strengthened—not weakened. The introspective question becomes—"Would God be able to put my name before Satan with that same confidence?"

Job 1:9–12 "Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD."

Obviously, Satan was well aware of Job because he had an immediate answer. He explains that Job's character was a result of preferential treatment from the LORD. This thought reminds me of the words of Peter.

1 Peter 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour...."

The wording of these verses also makes me think that Satan had tried to penetrate that hedge of protection around Job. Satan then throws out the challenge. If God caused Job to suffer the loss of all his treasures, Job would surely curse Him. So God gives Satan power over Job's possessions, but he cannot touch Job.

Satan wastes no time. In one day Job receives a series of message of bad news. First Satan provoked the Sabeans to steal all his ox and asses. Next he utilized fire from heaven to burn up all the sheep and their shepherds. Following that came news that the Chaldeans had stolen all the camels and killed all those tending them. Finally, comes the news that "a great wind from the wilderness" destroyed his son's home and all his children had been killed.

I think it is important to note that the power God allowed Satan to use involved employing human instruments of war, calling down fire from heaven and causing a tornado to accomplish his purposes. Though God limits Satan's ability as to how and when to utilize his power, he does have tremendous power.

How does Job respond?

Job 1:20–22 “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

Wow! Job passed his time of testing with flying colors. Job recognizes that God is the giver of all things and that He is sovereign in the right to bless and take away blessing. The question to think about—How would I have responded?

SATAN’S ATTACK ON JOB – ROUND 2

We begin this post with another meeting of God with the angels.

Job 2:1–6 “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.”

This is an amazing bit of scripture to me. When Satan once again presents himself before the LORD, the LORD very clearly wants Satan to acknowledge his defeat in his attempt to get Job to curse God. The LORD is clear in making the point that Job's suffering was “without cause.” In other words, Job had done nothing to deserve such personal attack. In fact, it appears that it is Job's commitment and faithfulness to God that brought disaster upon him.

Again, God praises Job as a man without equal on earth as a servant of God in spite of experiencing such personal devastation in his life. In fact, the wording acknowledges Satan's actions against Job as a direct result of His action to give Satan permission to act. In other words, He assumes responsibility for Job's suffering.

Satan is not deterred; he is very bold. Remember, it was pride that caused Satan's rebellion. Satan is trying to save face in the presence of the sons of God.

He throws out another challenge. If God would make him suffer physically, Job would curse God. Note that again the challenge is that God afflict Job. Without hesitation, God gives Satan permission to afflict Job, but he cannot kill him.

This definitely falls in the category of “my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways” as the LORD declares through the prophet Isaiah. If we are truthful, we must admit that more often than not we equate health, wealth and protection to God’s blessing and sickness and suffering as withholding of His blessing for some deserved reason. This is one of the main reasons that the book of Job is so important to us. It is a clear-cut case of testing, trouble, or disaster in our life as an opportunity to glorify God rather than punishment for wrongdoing.

Again Satan wastes no time; he immediately heads out to afflict Job with boils all over his body. Note that Satan is again utilizing his power as authorized by God. Other scriptures support this aspect of Satan’s powers.

Luke 13:16 “And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”

2 Corinthians 12:7 “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

How does Job respond? According to the accepted customs of the day. He separates himself so as not to cause infection to anyone else. He sits down among the ashes, which most reflect his feelings about life about now. Study indicated that these ashes were the residue of the dung that was burnt outside the city. You would have thought that a man of his position would have been tended to with great care. Evidently, his loss of possessions also resulted in loss of position and esteem of any sort. Oh how true to human nature that is. How many friends of people in positions of wealth and authority would remain their friends if they lost that wealth and/or position?

I would assume that scraping the boils with the broken piece of pottery must have provided some relief to endure the pain of the scraping. What a humiliating, painful position to be in.

At this point even Job’s wife adds to his misery by telling him that he should curse God and die.

Job 2:9 “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.”

Matthew Henry made an interesting statement regarding Job’s wife being left behind by Satan as a tool of torment. “If Satan leaves anything that he has permission to take away, it is with a design of mischief.” She did, however, hit the nail on the head—It was Job’s integrity that was being tested.

Job strongly rebukes his wife and then repeats the truth of God's sovereignty in choice of bestowing blessing and removing blessing. Still Job does not sin with his lips as Satan had said he would, but his time of testing is not over.

It's at this point in the narrative that Job's three friends enter the picture. I will only summarize this portion of the book.

I would assume that these friends of Job were some of the other most wealthy and influential men of the east. It would seem that they were quite good friends since they contacted one another regarding coming together to visit Job for the purposes of mourning with him and comforting him. After joining Job in a state of mourning for seven days and nights without saying a word, Job breaks the silence. He doesn't bother greeting his friends. He just begins unloading the pent up emotion in his heart. He doesn't curse God; he curses the day he was born. He does, however, begin to question God.

The three friends proceed to try to "comfort" Job by encouraging him to repent of his sins. The rest of the book contains the dialogue between Job and each of his friends as Job maintains his innocence before God. Though Job questions God and admits limited understanding, he stands firm in his faith and his ultimate vindication.

Job 16:18–20 "O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place. Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God."

Job 19:25–27 "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

Finally, God has heard enough and decides to insert Himself into the conversation. This is where we will pick up in the next post.

GOD BEGINS TO QUESTION JOB

Beginning with this post, we will take a look at every verse. I am going to switch to the NKJV for easier reading. My prayer is that as we go through each section, you too will take time to ponder on these questions and what they reveal to us about our Creator.

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

The voice of the LORD comes with power and force. He describes the human reasoning He has heard as devoid of knowledge. The LORD tells Job to prepare himself to answer His questions. Through this series of questions, Job is going to

be taught that God's actions on behalf of His creation are to be met with total submission and faith. These questions will provide an exclamation point on those very important verses in Isaiah.

Isaiah 55:8–9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

The LORD now begins asking a series of questions, one after another. These questions are meant to help Job understand that when it comes to understanding the ways of God, he simply cannot. God is too big; He is beyond our total understanding. That is one of the most important distinctives of Who He Is.

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

Obviously, Job wasn't around when the foundations of the earth were laid. He has no clue what the measures of that foundation are or how that foundation is anchored. Those measurements include the earth's position in the universe, the precise angle of its axis, its rotation, the force of gravity, etc. He didn't hear the angels singing or shouting for joy as they saw the creation of planet earth.

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

Job had no clue as to where the sea came from or how He controlled the waves and established the limits of their reach. He didn't understand the relationship of the moon and the tides. He didn't understand how the clouds could hold water.

Though Job did not have understanding as to when and how, he did give testimony of what he believed.

Job 26:7–8 & 10 “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.... He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.”

On to the next series of questions concerning day and night.

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

Job had obviously never exercised control over the dawn of the day or the rising of the sun in the east. This would include the positioning of the sun and its effect on the length of daylight and the seasons as experienced in the different locations on planet earth.

Job had never commanded the light to shine and expose wickedness. The light is described as revealing the shape of the earth, its topography, just like clay that is pressed into the shape of the seal that is used upon it. The light helps prevent the spread of wickedness by those who prefer to hide their deeds in the darkness. Couldn't help but think of the words of Jesus.

John 3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

God's questions for Job continue.

Job 38:16–18 "Have you explored the springs from which the seas come? Have you walked about and explored their depths? Do you know where the gates of death are located? Have you seen the gates of utter gloom? Do you realize the extent of the earth? Tell me about it if you know!"

The springs of the seas make reference to the underground chambers of waters in the earth located far in the depths of the sea. Job had no clue as to these depths or even where they were. Also acknowledged as underground were the gates of death or Hades. I like a statement John Wesley made regarding our knowledge of death: "While we are here in a world of sense, we speak of the world of spirits, as blind men do of colours, and when we remove thither, shall be amazed to find how much we were mistaken."

Though in our day we have much information regarding the size of the earth, we have yet to gain great understanding about the greatest depths of the earth and sea and its mysteries. Job, however, had no clue. The implication being, as with every other question, God knows all about these things.

GOD'S CONTINUED QUESTIONS AND JOB'S CONTINUED SILENCE

I pray that as we continue to go through each section of scripture in each upcoming post, you too will take time to ponder on these questions and what they reveal to us about our Creator.

Job 38:19–21 "Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, That you may take it to its territory, That you may know the paths to its home? Do you know it, because you were born then, Or because the number of your days is great?"

God is saying that there is a source from which all light is derived and a place set apart for the darkness. He then asks Job if he knows where those places are and

if he has the ability to control them. His questioning reminds Job that he wasn't even born when those places were established.

Don't we usually think of light as emanating from the sun, moon and stars? But these heavenly bodies were not created until the fourth day; the light and darkness were manifested and day and night defined in the first day. I have often simplistically described darkness as the absence of light, but it would seem that there is more to understand about both.

Again, the implied truth—God is in control of both and of how they are allowed to affect life on planet earth.

Job 38:22–24 ““Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail, Which I have reserved for the time of trouble, For the day of battle and war? By what way is light diffused, Or the east wind scattered over the earth?”

The LORD now asks Job if he knows where snow and hail are stored. Obviously, he doesn't. Then He reveals a very interesting fact—God has reserved the snow and hail “for the day of battle and war.” Being a student of prophecy, I immediately thought of the judgments associated with the time of God's wrath preceding the return of Jesus as King.

Revelation 8:6–7 “And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

Revelation 11:15 & 19 “And the seventh angel sounded....And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”

Revelation 16:17 & 21 “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air....And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

Can you imagine getting bombarded with hailstones weighing 75-100 pounds?

We also now know that the snow is of great wonder in that every snowflake is unique. I thought the following might add to your meditation; (source: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/alike/alike.htm>). It just emphasizes to me the awesomeness of the Creator of those snowflakes.

“The number of possible ways of making a complex snowflake is staggeringly large. To see just how much so, consider a simpler question -- how many ways can you arrange 15 books on your bookshelf? Well, there's 15 choices for the first book, 14 for the second, 13 for the third, etc. Multiply it out and there are over a trillion ways to arrange just 15 books. With a hundred books, the number of possible arrangements goes up to just under 10^{158} (that's a 1 followed by 158

zeros). That number is about 10^{70} times larger than the total number of atoms in the entire universe!

Now when you look at a complex snow crystal, you can often pick out a hundred separate features if you look closely. Since all those features could have grown differently, or ended up in slightly different places, the math is similar to that with the books. Thus the number of ways to make a complex snow crystal is absolutely huge." [end quote]

God returns to the subject of light and asks Job if he can explain how the light is distributed over the earth or how the east wind moves over the earth. Research reveals that light travels from the sun to the earth, 92,957,000 miles, at a speed of 186,282 miles per second in just over 8 minutes. This gives another amazing insight on the power of the Creator of such phenomena.

I think the east wind is included at this point because in scripture it is always seen as a destructive force used in judgment in the same way as the hail. Just as the light spreads itself to impact a large area, so can the effects of the east wind.

Exodus 10:13 "And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts."

Jeremiah 18:15–17 "Because my people hath forgotten me....I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity."

Can you put yourself in Job's shoes? Do you feel yourself getting smaller and smaller?

GOD'S RAPID FIRE QUESTIONING OF JOB CONTINUES

As we consider yet more of God's questions in this post, I truly pray that you are overwhelmed with the awesomeness of our Creator as you meditate on the associated truths.

Job 38:25–30 "Who created a channel for the torrents of rain? Who laid out the path for the lightning? Who makes the rain fall on barren land, in a desert where no one lives? Who sends the rain that satisfies the parched ground and makes the tender grass spring up? "Does the rain have a father? Where does dew come from? Who is the mother of the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens? For the water turns to ice as hard as rock, and the surface of the water freezes."

God's questions in this section make reference to the fact that rain falls in designated areas and lightning follows its own path. A lightning bolt is a powerful discharge of electrical energy. It can travel at speeds of 60,000 miles per second and reach a temperature of around 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Research also reveals that the extreme heat generated by lightning heats the air

so quickly that it expands and causes a shock wave that produces the sound of thunder. What does this tell you about its Creator?

Then God asks Job to consider the fact that He even sends rain to fall on the deserts where no one lives. The implied question—Why? The implied answer—He is sovereign over His creation; it's His choice according to His good pleasure.

Can Job explain where the rain, dew, ice and frost come from? How they are formed? Can he explain how the water turns to ice that is as hard as a rock? I think the reference here is to glaciers that are frozen like rock on the surface, yet the water remains fluid beneath them. It would also apply to seas and lakes that freeze over in the winter.

Job 38:31–33 ““Can you hold back the movements of the stars? Are you able to restrain the Pleiades or Orion? Can you ensure the proper sequence of the seasons or guide the constellation of the Bear with her cubs across the heavens? Do you know the laws of the universe and how God rules the earth?”

God now directs His questioning of Job to the subject of the stars in the heavens. I love to study the skies, and it has always awed me to think that the Old Testament saints were witness to the same stars and constellations that I see. Both the Pleiades, also known as the Seven Sisters, and Orion are among the most easily identifiable constellations in the night sky. God asks if Job knows how to keep the stars in these constellations together and ensure the orderly appearance of the different constellations throughout the year according to their appointed season. Does He have the power and authority to loose the force that holds them together? The Bear constellation, also known as Ursa Major and Arcturus, contains the Big Dipper and Polaris, the North Star that has long been an important navigational guide to those traversing the Northern Hemisphere of the globe.

The last question is so broad and covers so much that I am sure that Job again had no clue to all that it encompassed. The laws of the universe pertaining to just the Milky Way Galaxy involve the precise distances, order, rotation and orbits of the planets around the sun and how they are maintained. They pertain to the precise amounts and combinations of gases that are needed to support life on earth and how the supply of these gases is continually replenished. They relate to the makeup of atoms and their parts and how they interact with one another; they include defining gravity and how it functions; and the list could go on and on. Scripture gives us the simple answer.

*Colossians 1:17 “And He [Jesus] is before all things, and **by Him all things consist.**”*

The LORD may continue to allow the scientists to discover more about the creation and how it functions, but there comes a point when the only explanation for the wonders they discover will be that it is the handiwork of God and He alone sustains it.

Job 38:34–35 ““Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, That an abundance of water may cover you? Can you send out lightnings, that they may go, And say to you, “Here we are!?””

The LORD reverts back to more questions regarding the control of rain and lightning. He is basically saying—Job, Can you cause the clouds to release the rain at the command of your voice? Can you direct the lightning to strike where and when you want it to?

Again, the implication—I can and do.

GOD – THE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

This is the fourth post in which we are considering God’s questions to Job as He continues to make Job understand that we have no right to question our Creator. I am reminded of other scriptures addressing this subject.

Isaiah 64:8 “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”

Romans 9:20–21 “But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”

The sovereignty of the Creator over His creation should be a source of our meditation just as surely as the miraculous power and authority that is required to sustain it.

Job 38:36–38 “Who has put wisdom in the mind? Or who has given understanding to the heart? Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven, When the dust hardens in clumps, And the clods cling together?”

Wisdom is the ability to use what you know effectively for good; it is the ability to be discerning and make proper judgment. Understanding is the ability to interpret meaning and intention and to explain what you know. God is questioning Job as to the source of man’s wisdom and understanding. Even today can we explain the source behind the workings of the brain? Even in asking the question, point is made that man’s abilities are limited at best.

Even with what we know today, can we really number the clouds—a number that is constantly changing. Do we have the ability to command the clouds and direct the rains of heavens so as to soften the hardened clay of the deserts or to turn the hardened clay into a sticky, muddy mess? Even the process of seeding the clouds today is a complicated process and is dependent upon working with existing clouds and increasing their production—a process still controversial regarding the results achieved. We certainly can’t do it by speaking a command.

And who is the one who numbers the clouds and sets them in motion? God is definitely declaring that it is He.

Job 38:39–41 “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, When they crouch in their dens, Or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait? Who provides food for the raven, When its young ones cry to God, And wander about for lack of food?”

This series of questions turns to the innate ability given the lion (and other predators) regarding hunting food to eat and provide for their young. The raven is probably linked with the lion since it is a carnivore that would feast on the remains of the lion’s kill. God is declaring that He is the source for the skill and instincts of the lion and has provided for the needs of birds like the raven even as He has appointed them to serve in maintaining the balance of nature.

Job 39:1–4 “Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats bear young? Or can you mark when the deer gives birth? Can you number the months that they fulfill? Or do you know the time when they bear young? They bow down, They bring forth their young, They deliver their offspring. Their young ones are healthy, They grow strong with grain; They depart and do not return to them.”

The questions now address reproduction of the wild animals. God is pointing out to Job that he has no control over when and how they reproduce. Can he explain how they know innately what to do to give birth and how to take care of their young? Can he explain how the young ones know when it is time to go off on their own? Can he explain why there is no lasting bond between parent and offspring? God knows the answer to each one of these questions. Man can only observe the process.

Job 39:5–8 “Who set the wild donkey free? Who loosed the bonds of the onager, Whose home I have made the wilderness, And the barren land his dwelling? He scorns the tumult of the city; He does not heed the shouts of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, And he searches after every green thing.”

This section starts with the thought of who determines which animals roam free and which are made to serve man. It also addresses who determines where the animals are to live. Some were created and equipped to live in the desert, others in the mountains, and others in pastures that are tended by men. Some are naturally vegetarians and others, like those in the previous section, are natural meat eaters. Again, it is all a part of God’s overall plan to maintain the balance of nature and provide for each creature that is part of His creation. The obvious point being made yet again—Man has no control over any animal regarding its natural instincts and placing them where they naturally thrive.

Job 39:9–12 “Will the wild ox be willing to serve you? Will he bed by your manger? Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes? Or will he plow the valleys behind you? Will you trust him because his strength is great? Or will you leave your labor to him? Will you trust him to bring home your grain, And gather it to your threshing floor?”

Point is made in this section that there are some animals that man cannot tame. The Hebrew for unicorn makes reference to a wild bull. Some commentators think that the rhinoceros is meant as an obvious type of the unicorn that is known for its prominent horn. The obvious reference is to a grown animal that is too dumb and powerful to be tamed and put to work for man.

The implication of the question—God made this animal and programmed it according to His own purposes.

GOD GAVE THE ANIMALS THEIR INSTINCTS ACCORDING TO HIS SOVEREIGN PURPOSES

I hope you are enjoying meditating on the thoughts prompted by God's continued questioning of Job. I love thoughts that remind me of just how awesome my God is. We take so much for granted! It only makes my faith stronger as I navigate through this life and look forward to my future in His presence. Continuing our meditation with Job...

Job 39:13–18 “The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, But are her wings and pinions like the kindly stork's? For she leaves her eggs on the ground, And warms them in the dust; She forgets that a foot may crush them, Or that a wild beast may break them. She treats her young harshly, as though they were not hers; Her labor is in vain, without concern, Because God deprived her of wisdom, And did not endow her with understanding. When she lifts herself on high, She scorns the horse and its rider.”

The ostrich is certainly an interesting creature. It seems that God is taking delight in sharing with Job how the ostrich reflects His sovereignty over each creature. The ostrich has wings like a bird, but cannot fly. Unlike most birds, she is not careful with her eggs; in fact, they travel in herds and put all their eggs in one nest; the eggs are then basically left primarily to the care of the dominant male and female of the herd. Brian Bertram, author of The Ostrich Communal Nesting System (1992), reported that only 5 of 57 nests that he studied produced surviving hatchlings and that most eggs fell prey to predators.

Adam Clarke's Commentary includes a couple of interesting quotes: 1) “Mr. Jackson, in his *Account of Morocco*, observes: “The ostrich, having laid her eggs, goes away, *forgetting* or *forsaking* them: and if some other ostrich discover them, she hatches them as if they were her own, *forgetting* probably whether they are or are not; so deficient is the recollection of this bird.” 2) “*Xenophon* says, *Cyrus* had horses that could overtake the goat and the wild ass; but none that could reach this creature. A thousand golden ducats, or a *hundred* camels, was the stated price of a horse that could equal their speed.”

God explains these actions to Job as unique to how He created them; God chose to deprive her of wisdom and understanding according to His purposes. On the other hand, He chose to enable ostriches to run so fast that they can outrun a horse. They can sprint up to 43 mph and run for distance at 31 mph (per National Geographic). The point seems to be that this creature again emphasizes

the sovereignty of God over His creation and man's limited ability to understand God's reasoning through His actions.

Having described the horse's speed as unequal to the ostrich, God turns Job's focus to the strengths of the horse.

Job 39:19–25 “Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder? Can you frighten him like a locust? His majestic snorting strikes terror. He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He gallops into the clash of arms. He mocks at fear, and is not frightened; Nor does he turn back from the sword. The quiver rattles against him, The glittering spear and javelin. He devours the distance with fierceness and rage; Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet has sounded. At the blast of the trumpet he says, “Aha!” He smells the battle from afar, The thunder of captains and shouting.”

The Lord resumes a questioning format in reference to an animal with which Job should be familiar. Could Job take credit for giving the horse its strength and courage? Some translations are worded so as to compare the leaping ability of the horse to that of the locust. The horse is unafraid as he carries his rider into battle though he is confronted with sword, spear and javelin. The horse responds to the commands of his master without being frightened by the sound of trumpets or the shouting of men. That same courage would prove to hold true even when confronted with the invention of guns and cannons. It would seem to any observer that the horse relished the battle.

I am sure Job was feeling smaller and smaller as he considered his thoughts regarding his circumstances in light of the sovereignty and power of Almighty God, His Creator. From the horse God directs Job's attention to the hawk and eagle, the great birds of prey.

Job 39:26–30 “Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, And spread its wings toward the south? Does the eagle mount up at your command, And make its nest on high? On the rock it dwells and resides, On the crag of the rock and the stronghold. From there it spies out the prey; Its eyes observe from afar. Its young ones suck up blood; And where the slain are, there it is.”

Could Job take credit for designing the hawk or the eagle to fly at such height and such speeds? Did he give them the inner compass to control their migration senses and patterns? Could he direct these birds with the command of his voice? Did he give them the ability to make their nests at such heights in the mountains? Obviously, Job could not—but God can and did.

Hawks are slightly smaller than eagles. These birds have amazing vision with a range of 1 to 1.5 miles; eagles can spot fish from hundreds of feet in the air. Pound for pound the eagle's wings are stronger than an airplane's according to www.answers.com.

Obviously, the Creator of such a creature has power and authority far beyond human understanding. At this point the Lord stops His questioning and to allows Job to respond.

Job 40:1–5 “Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said: “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it.” Then Job answered the LORD and said: “Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth. Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further.”

After reeling off so many questions that reflect His power and man’s feebleness, YHWH, the self-existent, eternal God, our Creator, basically asks Job how he would correct or rebuke God for His actions. Frankly, I am surprised that Job could speak at all. I think I would have been a cowering blob of jello. Job admits that he is vile—of no estimation, completely insignificant, totally contemptible. He admits that he has no answer—in fact, he has already said way too much! Though he still did not understand the why of his circumstances, Job now understood that he had no right to question God concerning those circumstances.

But God is not quite finished instructing Job. In the next post we will begin the next round of questioning.

GOD QUESTIONS JOB – ROUND 2

Job 40:6–9 “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: “Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: “Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?”

I just tried to picture talking to God who is speaking to you from within a hurricane (from the Hebrew) or tornado. It would require a powerful, thundering voice; and that is exactly how the voice of the LORD is described in scripture.

Psalms 29:3–5, 7–9 “The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.”

I think it is easy to read through scripture without taking the time to meditate on what the Spirit is revealing to us. The voice of our God is POWERFUL beyond our full comprehension. It is this voice that is talking to Job and to us through the record of scripture. The message from a Being of such omnipotent power and authority should cause us to take the time to pause and consider the intended message.

The LORD is basically telling Job to stop and think. In light of our discourse to this point, are you still willing to question my actions towards you because of your perceived injustice? Can you interact with the creation with the same power and authority that I exercise? Wisely—Job remains silent.

Job 40:10–14 “Then adorn yourself with majesty and splendor, And array yourself with glory and beauty. Disperse the rage of your wrath; Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him. Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; Tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together, Bind their faces in hidden darkness. Then I will also confess to you That your own right hand can save you.”

The LORD continues driving home His point. He basically tells Job to prove his right to question God. God declares that if Job can present himself as God presents Himself and act with the same authority and power as God acts, he can assume authority over his own life. He should be able to clothe himself with *majesty*—with the dignity and authority of sovereign power; with *splendor*—grandeur and excellence; with *glory*—of great reputation and with distinction deserving of praise and honor; and with *beauty*—of excellent character marked by grace.

God’s righteousness requires that He respond to pride with anger and that He acts to humble the proud, and Job should be able to do the same. God ensures that the wicked will be totally separated from fellowship in the presence of His light, but will instead be bound together in darkness outside His presence in darkness for eternity. Note that this implies the ability to identify destructive pride and wicked actions with the same righteous discernment and judgment exercised by God.

Obviously, Job can meet none of the above requirements. The obvious implication, God can and does act with complete authority and according to His plan and purposes throughout the whole of His creation. The only proper response from Job is to surrender to God’s will as His Creator and LORD and trust in God’s righteous character and sovereignty regarding his own circumstances.

The LORD begins His closing discourse with Job by drawing his attention to two of the mightiest creatures of His creation—behemoth and leviathan, the latter giving insight regarding the coming antichrist.

Job 40:15–24 ““Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; He eats grass like an ox. See now, his strength is in his hips, And his power is in his stomach muscles. He moves his tail like a cedar; The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit. His bones are like beams of bronze, His ribs like bars of iron. He is the first of the ways of God; Only He who made him can bring near His sword. Surely the mountains yield food for him, And all the beasts of the field play there. He lies under the lotus trees, In a covert of reeds and marsh. The lotus trees cover him with their shade; The willows by the brook surround him. Indeed the river may rage, Yet he is not disturbed; He is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth, Though he takes it in his eyes, Or one pierces his nose with a snare.”

Behemoth cannot be identified with certainty, though some translations choose to connect it with the hippopotamus. Personally, I think the LORD intends that Job (and we) focus on its characteristics, though it would seem that Job knew about this creature for this description to be significant to him. This great creature was made in the beginning along with the creation of man. Though he eats only grass, he is very powerful. It seems that he has very powerful hips that find the center of their strength in his powerful stomach muscles. His tail is compared to a cedar tree, which is why I think we are referencing some type of dragon. The muscle sinew of his thighs is tightly entwined like a very thick rope. His bones are as strong as bronze and iron. When looking at the Hebrew, it is possible to deduce that this was possibly the first and definitely the most powerful creature made by God among the great beasts of the field. He has no reason to fear man or beast for only his Creator can pose any threat to him. He enjoys the bounty of nature's provision for sustenance and enjoys the coolness of the marshlands. He is so powerful that he has no fear of raging floodwaters.

In fact, this description implies that behemoth is no threat to man as long as man does not foolishly attempt to threaten him. I just don't think there is a creature in existence today that fittingly corresponds to this description.

As a side note--In my many readings of this section of scripture, this is the first time that I have picked up on the mention of the Jordan River. This would seem to indicate that Job lived somewhere in the area around the Jordan River for this description to be significant to him.

THE MIGHTY LEVIATHAN AND HIS CONNECTION WITH SATAN/ANTICHRIST

In this post the focus is on leviathan, a complete contrast in nature with the mighty behemoth. As I read through this description, I couldn't help but get the picture of a mighty, fire-breathing dragon. As we go through this section of scripture, I hope you will continue to meditate on the power and authority of the Creator of such a creature—your Creator, the sovereign Lord of the whole of creation. I will then close this post with observations regarding the application to the future antichrist. Note—this post is a bit longer than usual.

Job 41:1–11 “Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower? Can you put a reed through his nose, Or pierce his jaw with a hook? Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you? Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever? Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you leash him for your maidens? Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants? Can you fill his skin with harpoons, Or his head with fishing spears? Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle — Never do it again! Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false; Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him? No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up.” “Who then is able to stand against Me? Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.”

Leviathan is described as a creature that can't be caught with a hook. He is too dangerous to be captured and tamed or kept as a pet. The implication is that only a fool would try to capture him by any means. The LORD points out that as Creator of such a creature, why would anyone think they could stand against His authority. God boldly declares that everything under heaven belongs to Him; no one can claim precedence to Him.

The description of Leviathan continues: *Job 41:12–34 “I will not conceal his limbs, His mighty power, or his graceful proportions. Who can remove his outer coat? Who can approach him with a double bridle? Who can open the doors of his face, With his terrible teeth all around? His rows of scales are his pride, Shut up tightly as with a seal; One is so near another That no air can come between them; They are joined one to another, They stick together and cannot be parted. His sneezings flash forth light, And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lights; Sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, As from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals, And a flame goes out of his mouth. Strength dwells in his neck, And sorrow dances before him. The folds of his flesh are joined together; They are firm on him and cannot be moved. His heart is as hard as stone, Even as hard as the lower millstone. When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid; Because of his crashings they are beside themselves. Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail; Nor does spear, dart, or javelin. He regards iron as straw, And bronze as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee; Slingstones become like stubble to him. Darts are regarded as straw; He laughs at the threat of javelins. His undersides are like sharp potsherds; He spreads pointed marks in the mire. He makes the deep boil like a pot; He makes the sea like a pot of ointment. He leaves a shining wake behind him; One would think the deep had white hair. On earth there is nothing like him, Which is made without fear. He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride.”*

Leviathan is described as a striking creature to behold. Though tempting to try, he cannot be captured. He is covered with scales that are so close together as to prevent even air to come between them. He has powerful jaws and teeth. When he sneezes, it produces flashes of light and he shoots fire from his mouth and smoke from his nostrils. To further emphasize this point, we are told that he can kindle a fire in coals with his breath. He has a very powerful neck and causes terror wherever he goes. The implication is that his skin is so thick and his heart so well protected that no weapon of man can pierce it. He has no fear of man or his weapons. The scales on his underbelly are not only dense, but sharp. His powerful movements in the water make it look like the water is boiling and he leaves a great white wake behind him. He is the proudest of creatures and fears nothing on earth. There is no other creature like him in this regard.

Again, we can note that this is a very powerful creature whose primary domain is the sea. His demeanor is fierce and combative compared to the quiet confidence evidenced by the behemoth. As I have continued to meditate on this section, I think it is possible that these two animals can be seen as types in the creation of the contrast between the Creator and Satan. Behemoth is pictured in peace and at rest in the confidence of his superiority over the other creatures.

Leviathan, however, is pictured with great pride and arrogance; he seems to need to bolster his confidence by inciting fear and terror everywhere he goes.

The prophet Isaiah connects the dragon in the sea with leviathan.

Isaiah 27:1 "In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

The coming antichrist is also pictured as coming from the sea and coming in the power of the dragon—Satan.

Revelation 12:9 "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Revelation 13:1–2 "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

Every comparison I make between leviathan and antichrist is actually a comparison to Satan as well since he is the controlling force behind the antichrist.

He cannot be caught or controlled by others. (v1-2)

He is proud and arrogant. (v3)

He is not trustworthy nor concerned with helping others. (v4)

He rejects discipline and cannot be tamed. (v5)

He cannot be manipulated by others. (v6)

He will act without mercy toward his enemies. (v7-9)

He cannot be intimidated. (v10)

His power and authority come through God's permission and is limited according to God's purposes. (v11-12)

He acts with impunity during the time allotted him according to God's purposes. (v13-17)

His eyes and his words are penetrating and cause great fear to his enemies. His attitude is marked with simmering anger. (v18-21)

He is brash and bold in his sense of power. He relishes in the sorrow of his enemies. (v22)

He is hard-hearted and merciless. (v23-24)

He inspires fear in even the mightiest of men. (v25)

He fears nothing because nothing that man can do to him can stop him. (v26-30)

He causes great turmoil wherever he goes. His presence always leaves its mark. (v31-32)

He is full of pride to the point that he has no comparison on earth. There is no one on earth that can match his courage, confidence and power. (v33-34)

JOB ANSWERS GOD AND IS BLESSED

I guess the LORD must have stopped speaking to the point that Job knew it was time for him to formulate a response. Just the thought of this scenario is incredible to me; Job has been in direct audible communication with the LORD. Like Job, there have been many times that I have wished that I could experience just that. Though not with an audible voice, the LORD has certainly completely humbled me many times during special times of prayer before Him.

Job 42:1–6 “Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Job expresses his belief that there is nothing the LORD cannot do; in fact, he knew that we cannot even have a thought that can be hidden from Him. Job then references the question that God had posed to him earlier, basically—Who is this that presumes to question My actions with such limited knowledge and understanding? Job admits that he has been presuming to provide understanding about things he did not truly understand. He was basically admitting that he had no idea of all the wonder involved with God’s creation and His provision for it. Again Job makes reference to God’s words to him—Listen to me and answer my questions. Job admits that his relationship with God had been one of hearsay at best, but now he has experiential knowledge that has made him ashamed of himself. I think he realized that he was placing more faith in his “good” actions before the LORD than he was in the character, power and authority of Almighty God. For this, Job declares that he is very repentant.

Isn’t that one of the prime deceptions that we continue to fall for today. Even we who daily strive to serve the LORD have to continually deal with the issue of pride—at least I know I do. We are so prone to focus on “doing” for the LORD rather than on yielding to Him to “do” through us. How often do we take the

time to truly worship God and spend time with Him in meditation and the study of His word to get to know Him? How often do we take the time to appreciate the wonders of His creation? I'm afraid that the advances in knowledge and technology have made us appreciate God less rather than more. Just as God revealed when observing the people at the tower of Babel, "Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." (Genesis 11:6) The computer has pretty much removed the language barrier, and man has accomplished some pretty amazing things. I think this has lessened our appreciation of the wonder of God's creation. Instead of responding with awe to the wonders of the creation around us, we are much more prone to take them and, in turn, their Creator for granted.

The record of Job closes with God expressing His anger with Job's friends and instructing them to prepare a burnt offering in repentance for wrongly representing God to Job. God dealt mercifully with them as a result of Job's prayer for them.

We know that Job was given understanding of the reason behind his suffering because we have this written record. Job showed great humility in praying for his friends, and the LORD blessed him with twice as much as he had before. Interestingly enough—family and friends showed up out of the woodwork to offer Job comfort and curry his good favor with gifts once he was again a man of wealth and influence. I'll let the record speak for itself as to God's blessings upon Job.

Job 42:12–17 "Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-happuch. In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days."