

Faith Under Fire

Lesson #5 (Now, God Speaks)

Job Chapters 38-42

Scripture: 1 John 5:4 *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.”*

Introduction:

We have watched through this series Job begin pretty strong with a simple response to suffering and trials by dropping down on his knees and worshipping but when Satan was allowed to touch his flesh things begin to change.

While it is true that Job never cursed God he certainly struggled with his view of how God should conduct Himself.

His three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar tried to get Job to understand that the only reason for suffering and affliction was because Job had been engaged in sin and if he would only turn away from sin that God would restore him.

And finally Elihu is the angry young man that makes more sense than anyone. He is angry at Job because he justified himself rather than God.

Transitional Statement:

Here in our final lesson we will hear God talk with Job. One might expect God to lay out a full explanation to Job of events. We might even expect God to explain to Job just why it had to happen. But instead God chooses in entirety of context to address Job's faith in Him. Something that seems often to waver in the face of adversity even for us today. Is faith your victory?

I. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind Job 38:1

A. Job had desperately waited to hear from God

1. Job had thought that if he could only talk with God ...that things would be alright.
2. And, in some ways, Job had begun to think that God had abandoned him
3. But now the voice of the Almighty speaks to him.
 - a. This is where I would probably crawl under the table
 - b. I would probably be scared to death....do you know what I mean?

B. The text says that God answered out of a whirlwind.

1. Some commentators have put forth the significance of God veiling Himself for man's own protection.
 - a. This is certainly a noteworthy point ...

-As Paul tells Timothy that God dwells in unapproachable light and that no man has seen Him or can see Him. 1 Tim 6:16

2. But here I stop and wonder why a whirlwind?
 - a. Why didn't He use a vision, Balaam's donkey or just use an angle.
 - b. I think God's use of a whirlwind should not be underplayed.
 1. First, I see God making a connection to Elihu's speech.
 2. Then I also stop and remember that it was a great wind that had collapsed the house on his kids killing them all.
3. Perhaps every time the wind blows now, Job has a feeling of bitterness rush through his veins.
 - a. But when God shows up in the wind, Job is forced to take his faith to a different level.
 - b. Job's faith, like ours today, must move beyond what we see with our eyes, what understand with our minds and what we feel with our hearts.

-2 Corinthians 5:7 "*...for we walk by faith, not by sight*"

- c. By God showing up in a great wind Job is also moved immediately to consider the sovereignty of God.

-His all powerful ways.

II. Let's look at God's first words to Job (Job 38:1-3)

- A. God simply says "Who is this that darkens counsel..."
 1. This is only the first of 70 questions fired off in rapid sequence by God.
 - a. These questions are rhetorical in nature...that is they don't solicit a response but are meant to make a point.
 2. It is Job that is darkening counsel.
- B. What does He mean "darkening counsel"
 1. Darkens means to obscure or hide
 2. And counsel here has to do with a plot or a plan.
 - a. So God is asking Job why he has "darkened" or tried to obscure God's plans.
 - b. God is saying...Job, your getting in my way !
- C. I can't help but think that Job, like many of us today, had lost sight of the fact that God was working a plan in his life.

D. And when God adds *“by words without knowledge”*

1. He is pointing out that Job doesn't have any understanding about what has been going on at all.
 - a. He doesn't know anything of God's discussion with Satan at all
2. So when we lack understanding...maybe it is time for silence.
 - a. If ever there was a time for all the earth to keep silence before God and lean on their trust in Him, it would be during trials of suffering and despair.

E. To this God says *“Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!*

1. In the Old Testament times, when men prepared to do some hard work they would take their robe and tuck it into their belts, and they referred to this as girding up their loins.
 - a. Symbolic for preparing ones self.
2. Then God puts forth the idea that He will sit in the pupils seat and let Job take the teachers position.
 - a. Can you see Job cringing?

III. Now God as the student has some questions for the teacher

Chapter 38

A. 4 "Where were you when:

1. I laid the foundation of the earth?
 - a. Tell Me, if you have understanding,
2. 5 Who set its measurements?
 - a. Since you know.
3. Or who stretched the line on it?
4. 6 "On what were its bases sunk?
5. Or who laid its cornerstone,
 - a. 7 When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

B. Who has: 38:8-11

1. Enclosed the sea with doors and said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop'?

C. Have you: 38:12-18

1. Commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place, 12
2. Entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? 16
3. Have the gates of death been revealed to you, 17
4. Have you understood the expanse of the earth? 18

* Tell Me, if you know all this. V:18

D. Where is the way to the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where is its place, 38:19

1. "You know, for you were born then,
And the number of your days is great! 21

E. Have you entered the storehouses of the snow,
Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, 22

F. Where is the way that the light is divided,
Or the east wind scattered on the earth? 24

G. Or, Who has cleft a channel for the flood,
Or a way for the thunderbolt, 25

1. 28 "Has the rain a father?

H. 29 "From whose womb has come the ice?
And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth?

I. 31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades,
Or loose the cords of Orion?
32 "Can you lead forth a constellation in its season,
And guide the Bear with her satellites?

J. 33 "Do you know the ordinances of the heavens,
Or fix their rule over the earth?

K. 34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
So that an abundance of water will cover you?
35 "Can you send forth lightning that they may go
And say to you, 'Here we are'?

L. 36 "Who has put wisdom in the innermost being
Or given understanding to the mind?

Chapter 39

M. Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth?
Do you observe the calving of the deer?

N. 5 "Who sent out the wild donkey free?
And who loosed the bonds of the swift donkey,

6 To whom I gave the wilderness for a home
And the salt land for his dwelling place?

O. 10 "Can you bind the wild ox in a furrow with ropes,
Or will he harrow the valleys after you?"

P. 13 *"The ostriches' wings flap joyously
With the pinion and plumage of love,
14 For she abandons her eggs to the earth
And warms them in the dust,
15 And she forgets that a foot may crush them,
Or that a wild beast may trample them.
16 "She treats her young cruelly, as if they were not hers;
Though her labor be in vain, she is unconcerned;
17 Because God has made her forget wisdom,
And has not given her a share of understanding.*

Q. 19 "Do you give the horse his might?
Do you clothe his neck with a mane?"

R. 26 "Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars,
Stretching his wings toward the south?"

27 "Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high?"

IV. Then God puts it in plain terms for Job

A. He says: "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty?"

1. Let him who reproves God answer it." Job 40:2

B. I can't imagine what it must be like to be called onto the carpet by God.

1. But Job had boasted that if God would only speak to him that he would answer 13:22

C. But this is how Job responds to God: V 4-5

*"Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
5 "Once I have spoken, and I will not answer;
Even twice, and I will add nothing more."*

V. Now God begins a second round of question

A. Once again God tells him to gird up his loins...prepare !

B. Instruct me !

C. God asks Job some really straight forward questions: 40: 8

1. He says will you annual my judgments?
2. Will you condemn me that you might be justified?

- a. Remember Elihu was angry at Job for justifying himself rather than God. 32:2

D. Job 40:9-14

9 *"Or do you have an arm like God,
And can you thunder with a voice like His?
10 " Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity,
And clothe yourself with honor and majesty.
11 "Pour out the over-flowing of your anger,
And look on everyone who is proud, and make him low.
12 "Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him,
And tread down the wicked where they stand.
13 " Hide them in the dust together;
Bind them in the hidden place.
14 "Then I will also confess to you,
That your own right hand can save you.*

E. Then God talks about how you can see His power in the creatures that He has made

1. He talks about the strength of the Behemoth (Hippopotamus) which he created as well as Job 40:15-24
2. He also talks about the strength of the Leviathan (Crocodile) 41:1-34
3. It seems that God is saying that He has given adequate provision for each animal to endure its part of God's plan, and that God has also given mankind adequate provision for their lives within God's plan.

VI. Then Job makes his confession:

A. Job 42:2-6

*"I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'
"Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."
4 'Hear, now, and I will speak;
I will ask You, and You instruct me.'
5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You;
6 Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes."*

VII. Then God announces His displeasure with Job's friends.

A. Job 42:7-9

7 It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your

two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. 8 "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has." 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job."

VIII. Then God restored the fortunes of Job 42:10-17

- A. God poured His blessings on Job once again
- B. But the text says: when he prayed for his friends. V:10
 - 1. This is where a lot of people would hold grudges, but God wanted Job to help his friends regain their standing with God as well.
 - 2. And his blessing didn't come until he had reached out to his friends.
- C. And then he had a two fold increase V:10
 - 1. He went on to have 7 sons and 3 daughters
- D. The text says the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than the beginning 42:12

Conclusion:

- Note: God never addressed Job's suffering
- God never tried to vindicate Himself
- God never gives Job an explanation of events.
- Merely demands his trust.