

Great Questions God Asked

Job 38-42

July 8th, 2018

I'm currently preaching through a series of some of the great questions God asked in the Bible. This morning we find ourselves in the closing pages of the book of Job. So, please turn in your Bibles to Job 38. And as you do that let me catch you up quickly on the account of Job.

Job was a very righteous follower of God.

Job 1:1 (NIV) *In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.*

In **chapter 31** Job recounts to his friends aspects of his righteous life and he declares that he is not guilty of lust, deceit, covetousness, idolatry or adultery. He has not failed to care for the poor and has not taken advantage of the weak. He has not trusted in his wealth or rejoiced in the ruin of his enemies. He never failed to extend hospitality to strangers and he never concealed a sin, or misused his land. **Job 1:4** declares that *he was the greatest man among all the people in the East*. That's quite an impressive resume.

Immediately after this brief introduction to Job's impressive life, we're given a glimpse into heaven and we're told that there was this moment when the angels and Satan appeared before God and had the following dialogue.

Job 1:6-12 (NIV) One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, *"Where have you come from?"*

Satan answered the Lord, *"From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."*

8 Then the Lord said to Satan, *"Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."*

9 *"Does Job fear God for nothing?"* Satan replied. 10 *"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."*

12 The Lord said to Satan, *"Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."*

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Shortly after that Satan carried out his plan and Job's entire family, except for his wife, were wiped out and he lost his massive amount of livestock and most of his servants as well. After that Satan received permission from God to strike his body as well and he ended up covered with very painful sores.

His wife's response was that Job should just curse God and die.

Three friends of Job's, **Eliphaz**, **Bildad** and **Zophar** gathered around him and for most of the remainder of the book kept giving very poor advice to Job. Basically they told Job that he must have committed some sin that God is punishing him for. However, Job keeps denying this is the case. Job is convinced that all that's happened to him is from the God's hand, but he doesn't understand why God is doing this to him.

On a couple of occasions, Job is as bold as to demand an explanation from God.

Job 13:20-23 (NIV) *"Only grant me these two things, God, and then I will not hide from you: 21 Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. 22 Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply to me.*

23 How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin.

Job 23:3-7 (NIV) *If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling!
 4 I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments.
 5 I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say to me.
 6 Would he vigorously oppose me? No, he would not press charges against me.
 7 There the upright can establish their innocence before him, and there I would be delivered forever from my judge.*

That's quite bold of Job and he gets his wish. In chapter 38 God shows up and begins to ask Job some questions. In fact he asks Job a total of 77 questions in rapid fire succession.

- God starts off by asking Job if he was there when he laid the earth's foundation?
- Did Job set up the parameters of the massive universe we live in?
- Where you there when the angels and the morning stars burst into song at creation?
- He asks Job if he knows where light and darkness are stored or snow and hail and lightning, wind and ice.
- Vs 35 he asks if the lighting bolts report to him and say: "*Here we are*".
- Then God focuses on earth and asks if Job understands various animals such as the rooster, lioness or lion, the raven, or mountain goats or bears or wild donkeys or wild ox, or the ostrich, the stork or the horse.
- Does the hawk decide to fly by your wisdom and does the majestic eagle soar at your command?

There's a break at the beginning of chapter 40 when God directly addresses Job.

Job 40:1-7 (NIV) The Lord said to Job:

2 "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!"

3 Then Job answered the Lord:

4 "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. 5 I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more."

6 Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm: *7 "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.*

- He asks Job if he would question His justice and His right to act.
- Are you powerful like God and is your voice and power like the thunder?
- Do you have the ability to bring the proud to their knees?
- He asks Job if he has the ability to control two of God's most powerful beasts- the Behemoth and the Leviathan and God has quite the impressive descriptions of these two animals.

Then in chapter 42 God quits presenting His case and Job responds.

Job 42:1-6 (NIV) Then Job replied to the Lord: *2 "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.*

4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'

5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

So much for demanding an audience with God for Job to present his case before God and God explain why He so severely afflicted Job. This arrogant and bold demand for God to show up comes to a screeching halt once God shows up.

That's pretty consistent throughout Scripture.

- In **Isaiah 6**, the prophet is given a glimpse into God's throne room and he immediately realizes that he's a sinner in the presence of a holy God and feels very inadequate to be in God's presence.

- In Revelation, John is similarly given a glimpse into heaven and what does he see? He sees every creature in heaven bowing down to God and declaring: *"Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. Who was and is and is to come."*

Did you notice what God doesn't give Job? He doesn't give him a reason for why He allowed all of this calamity to come into his life. He never tells him about this dialogue He had with Satan and how He allowed Satan to inflict all of this pain and suffering on him to prove that Job really did love God. And while God was right, it's very natural to feel like this whole process is unfair – just like perhaps you've often felt that what you had to go through was unfair as well. We often expect that if we serve God faithfully – then we have a right to expect a better treatment than those who don't faithfully serve God. I often hear people say that they have a whole lot of questions that they want to ask God when they finally come face to face with Him. Do you really think that when any of us appear before Almighty God that we're still going to want to ask Him those questions and demand an answer as to why He allowed certain painful experiences into your life? Maybe, but I kind of doubt it.

I tend to believe that once we experience the literal presence of God, nothing else is going to matter at that point. All of our well conceived questions that rose up out of our pain are going to matter anymore. Rather, **like Job**, we will be dazzled beyond belief with God majesty and grandeur and greatness and nothing else will matter at that point.

And so, while God didn't answer Job's deep questions He did something far better. He revealed Himself to Job and reminded him through a series of 77 questions just how powerful He is and how He's incomparable to anyone else in all of creation. He's the Creator and everything else is what He's created- big difference.

While there's a whole lot of unanswered and unsettling questions that I am always left with after studying Job there are a couple of points that ring true that I can find rest comfort in.

Lessons to Apply from Job:

1. **God is not threatened by my doubts and questions.** It's not a sin to question God or His motives. We can be real with God. At the very end, *God repeats twice that Job said what was right (42:7,8b) in regards to God.*
2. **It is better and more useful to praise God then to complain** (see the advice of Elihu)
Job 35:9-11 (NIV) *"People cry out under a load of oppression; they plead for relief from the arm of the powerful. But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night, who teaches us more than he teaches the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds in the sky?'"* Often it feels more natural to complain over how we're not being treated right by God or others rather than to focus on the goodness and greatness of God.
3. **God is with me and for me, even when I can't sense Him.** Don't trust in your feelings but trust in what you know to be true about God from His Word. Feelings and our experiences can often be untrustworthy. God promised that he would never leave us or forsake us
Hebrews 13:5 (NIV) *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."* Notice carefully the context here. People often seek contentment in money and worldly possessions rather than God.

4. **God may often use our life's circumstances to refine us.**

Job 36:15-16 (NIV) *But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction. 16 "He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place free from restriction, to the comfort of your table laden with choice food.* Elihu shares with Job that he believes partly why all of this has happened to Job is because Job has become arrogant. And it's possible for us to lots of really good things for God and yet neglect God. It's possible for us to find our life in what we do for God rather than in God Himself.

5. **We need to desire more of God than answers to our questions.** Is God enough for you?

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What happened to Job and why ?

How would you feel if you were Job?

What was Job demanding from God?

How did God respond to Job?

What was Job's response to God presenting Himself to Job?

What doesn't God give Job?

Lessons to Apply from Job:

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What questions do you have from Job?

When you're going through difficulties to do tend to complain or praise?

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