

Gratitude in the Midst of Suffering

Exploring the Book of Job

Job, the Person

- ^{1:1} There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was **blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil**. ² Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. ³ His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east. ⁴ His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and **offering burnt offerings** according to the number of them all; for Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did **continually**.
- Job was **God’s partner** in blessing the world

God's Response to Job: 38:1 – 2

- 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,
2 Who is this that **darkens** counsel by words without knowledge?

Job's Deathwish: Darkness (3:3 – 9)

- 3:3 Let the day perish on which I was to be born, And the night which said, 'A boy is conceived.'
4 May that day be **darkness**; Let not God above care for it, **Nor light shine** on it.
5 Let **darkness and black gloom** claim it; Let a cloud settle on it; Let the **blackness** of the day terrify it.
6 As for that night, let **darkness** seize it; Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; Let it not come into the number of the months.
7 Behold, let that night be barren; Let no joyful shout enter it.
8 Let those curse it who curse the day, Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan [the crocodile].
9 Let the stars of its twilight be **darkened**; Let it wait for light but have **none**, And let it not see the breaking dawn;

God's Response: Light (38:3 – 21)

- ³ Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!
⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding,
⁵ Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it?
⁶ On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone,
⁷ When the **morning stars sang together** And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
¹² Have you ever in your life commanded the **morning**, 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 is changed like clay under the seal; And they stand forth like a garment.

God's Response: Light (38:3 – 21)

- ¹⁵ From the wicked their light is withheld, And the uplifted arm is broken.
¹⁶ Have you entered into the springs of the sea Or walked in the recesses of the deep?
¹⁷ Have the gates of death been revealed to you, Or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?
¹⁸ Have you understood the expanse 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 And that you may discern the paths to its home?
²¹ You know, for you were born then, And the number of your days is great!

God's Response: Water for Life (38:8 – 30)

- 38:8 Or who enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the **womb**;
9 When I **made a cloud its garment** And thick darkness its **swaddling band**,
10 And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors,
11 And I said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop'?

God's Response: Water for Life (38:8 – 30)

- ²² Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
²³ Which I have reserved for the time of distress, For the day of war and battle?
²⁴ Where is the way that the light is divided, Or the east wind scattered on the earth?
²⁵ Who has cleft a channel for the flood, Or a way for the thunderbolt,
²⁶ To bring rain on a land without people, On a desert without a man in it,
²⁷ To satisfy the waste and desolate land And to make the seeds of grass to sprout?

God's Response: Water for Life (38:8 – 30)

- ²⁸ Has the rain a **father**? Or who has **begotten** the drops of dew?
²⁹ From whose **womb** has come the ice? And the frost of heaven,
who has given it **birth**?
³⁰ Water becomes hard like stone, And the surface of the deep is
imprisoned.

God's Response: Personal Involvement for Life and Beauty (38:31 – 37)

- 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?
33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, Or fix their rule over the earth?
34 Can you **lift up your voice to** the clouds, So that an abundance of water will cover you?
35 Can you **send forth** lightnings that they may go And say to you, 'Here we are'?
36 Who has **put wisdom in** the innermost being Or given understanding to the mind?
37 Who can **count** the clouds by wisdom, Or **tip** the water jars of the heavens,

Job's Language About God: You Are Arbitrary, Distant (9:5 – 9)

- 9:5 It is God who **removes the mountains (?)**, they know not how,
When He overturns them in His anger;
6 Who **shakes the earth out of its place (?)**, And its pillars tremble;
7 Who **commands the sun not to shine (?)**, And sets a seal upon the
stars;
8 Who alone stretches out the heavens And tramples down the
waves of the sea;
9 Who **makes** the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers
of the south;

God's Response to Job:

I Am Orderly, Intimate (38:4, 12, 31 – 32)

- 38:4 Where were you when I **laid the foundation** of the earth?
38:12 Have you ever in your life commanded the **morning**, And caused the **dawn** to know its place...
38:31 Can you **bind** the chains of the Pleiades, Or **loose** the cords of Orion?
38:32 Can you **lead forth** a constellation in its season, And **guide** the Bear with her satellites?

Job's Deathwish: I Wish I Had Died (3:10 – 19)

- 3:10 Because it did not shut the opening of my mother's womb, Or hide trouble from my eyes.
11 Why did I not **die** at birth, Come forth from the womb and **expire**?
12 Why did the knees receive me, And why the breasts, that I should suck?

Job's Deathwish:

Death is Rest, Ease, Freedom (3:10 – 19)

- 3:13 For now I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept then, I would have been at *rest*,
14 With kings and with counselors of the earth, Who rebuilt ruins for themselves;
15 Or with princes who had gold, Who were filling their houses with silver.
16 Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be, As infants that never saw light.
17 There the wicked cease from raging, And there the weary are at *rest*.
18 The prisoners are *at ease* together; They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.
19 The small and the great are there, And the slave is *free* from his master.

God's Response: Life (38:39 – 39:5)

- 38:39 Can you **hunt the prey** for the lion, Or **satisfy the appetite** of the young lions,
40 When they crouch in their dens And lie in wait in their lair?
41 Who prepares for the raven its **nourishment** When its young cry to God And wander about without food?
39:1 Do you know the time the mountain goats give **birth**? Do you observe the **calving** of the deer?
2 Can you count the months they **fulfill**, Or do you know the time they give **birth**?
3 They kneel down, they **bring forth their young**, They get rid of their labor pains.
4 Their **offspring** become strong, they **grow up** in the open field; They leave and do not return to them.
5 Who sent out the wild donkey **free**? And who **loosed the bonds** of the swift donkey...

Job's Response: Silence (40:3 – 5; 42:2 – 3)

- 40:3 Then Job answered the LORD and said,
4 '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...'

42:2 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?' [You said]; Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

God's Response: Summary

- God is not behind your suffering
- God suffers with us
- God is ahead of your suffering in resurrection

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 - ^{19:25} As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.
 - ²⁶ Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;
 - ²⁷ Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another.