

God Will Take Care Of You!

Job 40-41

Job had once wanted to question God, and with great passion he demanded to be brought into God's court (Job 31:35-37). Now, after God reveals Himself and the restoration of a sense of relationship with Him, Job sensed his own humble position before God and realized that he could not answer God.

What these speeches do not contain is almost as important as what they do. The speeches do not reverse the Lord's judgment in the Prologue about Job. Satan was wrong in attacking Job's inner reasons for being righteous, and the friends were wrong about Job's outward conduct as a reason for his suffering... Job did not get the bill of indictment or verdict of innocence he wanted from God, but neither was he humiliated with a list of sins he had committed for which he was being punished. God did not come to Job as a judge or a policeman. He came to Job as a teacher – a loving, winsome, vivid, powerful, humorous teacher.

If we find it frustrating that God never gives Job any reasons for his long ordeal of suffering, then we have entirely missed the point of these final chapters. While it is true that the Lord's answer to Job is neither logical nor theological, this is not the same as saying that He gives no answer. The Lord does give an answer. His answer is Himself. The world is full of mysteries—strange, unapproachable, overpowering mysteries that you cannot read. Trust in the power, and in the wisdom, and in the goodness of Him, the Almighty One, who rules it.

God rejoices in His own creation as He describes the wonder of this remarkable animal noting its strength, size, appetite, and habits. The picture is clear. If Job cannot contend with his own life, how could he ever contend with the God who created the Behemoth or Leviathan?

The overarching lesson to Job in the final chapter is that God Oversees The Unknowns In His Universe.

God created the universe and now he learns God controls the universe. God takes Job to the zoo. He takes him on a little tour of all of the animals. Who feeds, loves, and protects all these animals and all these birds?

1. God Provides For His Creation.

“Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?” Job 38:39-41

He asked Job, do you have a Convenience Store on the corner? Where do those lions get their food? Who provides for the raven his food? Who feeds the birds of the air?

We know the answer to that one. It is God, and He cares for us the same way.

Jesus said in Luke 12:24, *“Consider the ravens for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them all. Are you not of more value than they?”* Luke 12:24

Aren't you glad God didn't put mankind in charge of a food program for the birds and the animals?

Look at the mess we've made of human feeding programs. Jesus says God feeds them and then He says that you are better than the birds of the air. His eye is on the sparrow and I know, He's watching you and you and you and you.

Jesus affirmed this very principle when he talked about God's care for us, *"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."* Matthew 10:29

2. God Providentially Watches Over His Creation.

God reminded Job of the arrangement of growth and maturity. He has engineered the natural order. Did Job design this, or even know much about it? In chapter 39 he talks about the wild mountain goats and giving birth.

"Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth? They crouch down and bring forth their young; their labor pains are ended. Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds." Job 39:1-4

All of the animals have different times of gestation. He is saying, "Job, are you the obstetrician on the scene?" No, God is the obstetrician. He's the One who knows when it's time for the mountain goats to give birth to their young.

This world made by God operates with remarkable order and wisdom. You can't deny His wisdom and government of all things. There are things in all lives we can't understand. We simply trust God who does all things so marvelously well.

Then he jumps over to the donkeys in verse 5. *"Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied its ropes? I gave it the wasteland as its home, the salt flats as its habitat. It laughs at the commotion in the town; it does not hear a driver's shout. It ranges the hills for its pasture and searches for any green thing."* Job 39:5-8

The wild donkey was one of the most admired animals of the Old Testament world for both its freedom and its ability to survive under the harshest conditions. Job had no knowledge of these facts of nature. He had even less power over these animals. The wild donkey in the desert is just as free as it can be. He sees his city cousins and laughs at them because they are bound and made to work.

He talks about the wild ox in verse 9 which in the classic King James Version translation is "unicorn." This was actually a fearsome, mighty, extinct animal known as the "aurochs." The wild ox is mentioned nine times in the Old Testament. It was the most powerful of all hoofed beasts, exceeded in size only by the hippopotamus and the elephant. It is the standard symbol of strength. God gives us the humorous picture of Job using a rhino to plow his field or put him into his barn.

"Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will it stay by your manger at night? Can you hold it to the furrow with a harness? Will it till the valleys behind you? Will you rely on it for its great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to it? Can you trust it to haul in your grain and bring it to your threshing floor?" Job 39:9-12

In verse 13 God talks about the peacocks and the ostrich.

"The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and feathers of the stork. She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them. She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers; she cares not that her labor was in vain, for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense. Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider." Job 39:13-18

He is saying—Take a look at Big Bird! Sesame Street didn't make that, I made that. If you are so smart, Job, just explain the ostrich to me. The ostrich is the biggest living bird. Some of them weigh over 300 pounds and grow to be seven or eight feet in height. Can you explain why a flightless bird has wings, or why a winged

creature is flightless. His advice to Job through the ostrich: “Be like the ostrich. Although you cannot fly, you can still flap your wings joyfully!”

The ostrich also has no maternal instinct. They have no interest in their young. They put their eggs on the surface of the sand so that any animal can just come by and crush it. God didn't give the ostrich a lot of smarts. But he providentially care for their young. God says, look at the ostrich. They flap their wings to get themselves started and they take off running. It can't fly but the ostrich can outrun a horse. They have been clocked up to 40 mph. God has a great sense of humor! Sometimes God just creates something for our entertainment. Somethings just to give us a good laugh. In this world we need a good laugh occasionally.

In verse 19 he talks about the warhorse. Like many people, Job could be impressed with the majestic strength of the horse, yet he had no strength to give the horse. Its strength came from God and not from Job or any other man. Job could give no explanation for the warrior nature of a horse, which operates against reason and the self-interest of the horse.

“Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane? Do you make it leap like a locust, striking terror with its proud snorting? It paws fiercely, rejoicing in its strength, and charges into the fray. It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; it does not shy away from the sword. The quiver rattles against its side, along with the flashing spear and lance. In frenzied excitement it eats up the ground; it cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. At the blast of the trumpet it snorts, ‘Aha!’ It catches the scent of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry.” Job 39:19-25

After considering many land animals and the wisdom and mystery surrounding them, God turned to a majestic bird – the hawk. Job could not explain, much less create the mechanics of flight for this noble bird.

“Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build its nest on high? It dwells on a cliff and stays there at night; a rocky crag is its stronghold. From there it looks for food; its eyes detect it from afar. Its young ones feast on blood, and where the slain are, there it is.” Job 39:26-30

What about that eagle? Job was equally powerless to explain the eagle and its ways, much less to command it. Look at this description of the eagle. Job do you tell the eagle to go up as high as it goes? Eagles are known for building their nests up in inaccessible places. Eagles are known for their keen eyesight. That eagle has a computer on the inside of its little brain. Those eyes zoom in and spy the prey and in a moment they swoop down just screaming and flying. All of a sudden that computer says to make a turn and that eagle makes a pinpoint turn and reaches down and gets its prey and it's up and gone. Who gave the eagle all of that ability? You didn't, Job, God did.

In Job chapter 40, verse 1, the Lord says, *“The Lord said to Job: ‘Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!’”* Job 40:1-2

Job makes a response. In verse 3 he says, *“Then Job answered the Lord: ‘I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer—twice, but I will say no more.’”* Job 40:3-5

Job comes to a place of humbleness before God. All of the arguing of Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu could not bring Job to this place. Only the revelation of God could humble Job and set him in his right place before the LORD. Job made his strong and sometimes outrageous statements when he felt, to the core of his soul, that the LORD had forsaken him. Now, with his sense of the presence of the LORD restored, Job could better see his place before God.

It is important to remember that God never forsook Job; that while He withdrew the sense of His presence (and this was the cause of profound misery to Job), God was present with Job all along, strengthening Him with His unseen hand. Job could have never survived this ordeal without that unseen, unsensed hand of God supporting him.

God's manner with Job in these chapters is marked by warm and loving fellowship more than harsh rebuke.

"It is the goodness of God that leads man to repentance." Romans 2:4

You think you have the physical universe all figured out? Do you think you comprehend the physical universe? It's amazing what we don't know. A scientist was doing some research on the physical universe. His superiors asked him to write a summarization of his research – what he had found out about the physical universe and how it operates - in 150 words. So, 50 times he wrote these three words – "I DON'T KNOW." Pretty honest, wasn't he?

What God says to Job in verse 6 and following is this – "Job, do you think you can run this universe better than I can? Do you think you are smart enough now to figure out the matters of good and evil?"

"Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm: 'Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'" Job 40:6-7

He says in verse 8-9, *"Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his?" Job 40:8-9*

Job had gone so far maintaining his own innocence that he attacked the justice of God. That's why he said he would strut like a king into his presence. By the way, he's in the presence of God now, and he's not strutting.

When you read the scriptures and find people who came into the presence of God, they didn't go strutting around, they were prostrate. The closer you get to a holy God, the more prostrate you will become.

He said, "If you are going to play God, Job, you need to dress the part." Verse 10, *"Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty."* Job 40:10

He is saying, "Job, dress up like me now, if you are going to play God."

"Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at all who are proud and bring them low." Job 40:11

Job, you make the decisions now. You are so smart, you make decisions about wisdom and justice and you take care of the wicked.

"Look at all who are proud and humble them, crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you." Job 40:12

What are you going to do, Job? If you are going to play God, are you capable of punishing the wicked?

Then God does the most amazing thing. He takes the camera and zooms in on two of God's preachers.

3. God Powerfully Controls The Uncontrollable.

In verse 15 he says, *“Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength it has in its loins, what power in the muscles of its belly! Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron. It ranks first among the works of God, yet its Maker can approach it with his sword. The hills bring it their produce, and all the wild animals play nearby. Under the lotus plants it lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh. The lotuses conceal it in their shadow; the poplars by the stream surround it. A raging river does not alarm it; it is secure, though the Jordan should surge against its mouth. Can anyone capture it by the eyes, or trap it and pierce its nose?”* Job 40:15-24

Some think this is probably a hippopotamus. Some believe that these were prehistoric animals.

A tour leader was giving his presentation in a museum. People would come in and he would explain these dinosaur bones that had been put together. In his lecture, he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this dinosaur was two million and six years old." When the tour was over, one of the tourists came up to him and said, "I can buy this two million, but where do you get that two million and six years?" The guy said, "When I came to work here they told me that this dinosaur was two million years old and I've been working here for six years now." It's amazing how people throw around a million or two. Have you ever thought what a million is?

You can see the hippopotamus down in that water and all you can see is his eyeballs. What's God talking about? There is no known purpose for the hippopotamus. Job, do you comprehend the things that seem to be useless? Job, though you may not understand the purpose of the hippopotamus, does that mean there is no purpose because you don't know what it is?

That's one of the problems we are facing in our culture right now. One of the reasons we are facing the problem of the value of human life in our culture is because they don't know what the purpose is of one of God's creation. Every creation of God is precious in God's sight. There is a purpose. Even that which may seem ridiculous and useless to us.

In chapter 41, He picks another animal. *“Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook or tie down its tongue with a rope? Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook? Will it keep begging you for mercy? Will it speak to you with gentle words? Will it make an agreement with you for you to take it as your slave for life?”* Job 41:1-4

This is probably referring to a crocodile. He's talking about the vicious creation. A crocodile is one of the most vicious of all the creatures. They tell me there's a difference between an alligator and a crocodile. An alligator will not attack unless provoked, but a crocodile will pursue you. It is so vicious.

“Can you make a pet of it like a bird or put it on a leash for the young women in your house? Will traders barter for it? Will they divide it up among the merchants? Can you fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears? If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again! Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse it. Who then is able to stand against me? Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.” Job 41:5-11

Are you going to make a pet out of him like a bird or put him on a leash for one of your young children?

“I will not fail to speak of Leviathan's limbs, its strength and its graceful form. Who can strip off its outer coat? Who can penetrate its double coat of armor? Who dares open the doors of its mouth, ringed about with fearsome teeth? Its back has rows of shields tightly sealed together; each is so close to the next that no air can pass between.” Job 41:12-16

Leviathan is considered to be a mythical sea-monster or dragon that terrorized sailors and fishermen. Yet in the context of Job 41, God does not seem to consider Leviathan to be mythical at all. Some believe that Leviathan describes some ancient dragon-like dinosaur that either survived to Job's day, or survived in the collective memory of mankind, so that God could refer to it as an example. Others consider that in this context, Leviathan is nothing more than a mighty crocodile.

The name Leviathan means "twisting one" and is also used in other interesting places in Scripture.

Psalms 74:12-14 refers to Leviathan as a sea serpent, and that God broke the head of the Leviathan long ago, perhaps at the creation.

Psalms 104:26 also refers to Leviathan as a sea creature.

Isaiah 27:1 speaks of the future defeat of Leviathan, also associating it with a twisted serpent that lives in the sea.

Isaiah 51:9 and Psalms 89:8-10 also speak of a serpent associated with the sea that God defeated as a demonstration of His great strength, and identifies this serpent with the name Rahab, meaning "proud one."

Job 26:12-13 also refers to God's piercing defeat of a fleeing serpent associated with the sea.

Verse 33, "*Nothing on earth is its equal—a creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty; it is king over all that are proud.*" Job 41:33-34

God's point with this description of Leviathan is to show Job just how powerless he is against this creature. There is nothing that Job can do against this mighty monster.

Job, what are you going to do with the vicious things?

How are you going to solve all the problems?

Do you understand all the presence of evil?

The answer is of course, no.

When it's over in chapter 42, Job says, "*Then Job replied to the Lord: 'I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 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. You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.'*" Job 42:1-6

Job is suffering. He's crying out, asking, "Why am I suffering?" Why is God giving him a discussion of creation? Why doesn't He answer the question?

First, God doesn't owe anybody an explanation.

God is not going to be on call and come running every time you have a question.

God is far better than any answer.

Which would you rather have? A little book with a few answers in them, or a teacher who has all the answers?

When answers aren't enough, there's Jesus. When you don't have all the answers, if you have the Lord, that's all you ever need. The God who created, the God who controls, and the God who comprehends this universe - if He understands the physical universe and knows what He's doing.

You can be sure God understands and knows what He is doing in His moral and spiritual universe. I am very happy to leave the unanswered questions of this universe in the hands of the God who created it all. What we really need is not an explanation, we need a revelation.

God was saying to Job, "Job, the question is not why; the question is Who."

When you know Who; you don't have to know why.