



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

JOB: LESSON 13

Well, this is it. At last we've come to the end of the words spoken by Job's friends. Thank goodness! I don't know about you, but I have grown very weary of their constant belittling of Job and the insensitivity to his situation. They're done; finished. And before Job even has a chance to answer Elihu, God suddenly shows up. Job 38:1 begins by saying that "God answered Job out of the whirlwind." Elihu had talked a lot about God's creation and nature, so it's ironic that the Lord appears from a whirlwind. Some believe that this is a real whirlwind, while others think it's written in a figurative sense. I really don't know the answer to that, but one thing I do know. If God "appeared" and began talking, I would hope that I would respond like Job, and just keep my mouth shut!

In 38:1, God is called "the Lord" which hasn't been used very often in this book. It means "Jehovah God" and is a name that speaks of His self-existence in Exodus 3:13-14 (I AM THAT I AM). It's a name that also speaks of His personal covenant relationship with His people.

My heart begins to pound as I read the words of the Lord. I feel like we're standing on holy ground and a hush has just come upon us. It doesn't seem like God is speaking in that "still small voice" we always talk about. God has been silent for 37 chapters and now His voice comes to Job with a fierce and powerful intensity. No, God doesn't whisper, nor does He go down Job's list of questions and answer them logically. The Lord also didn't apologize for being silent for so long. I read that God asks Job a total of 77 questions. Now who is questioning whom? God asks some rhetorical questions, as well as some "real" ones. Job is about to discover how limited human wisdom is apart from divine revelation. I pray that we are reminded of that same thing this week as we study the next few chapters.

First Day

1. Think back on all you've read so far in the book of Job. What do you think Job's friends would have expected God to say when He showed up? What do you think Job would have expected?
2. Read Job 38 through 40:2. God says a lot in these chapters. Summarize God's main points in your own words. What is the purpose of this "interrogation"?
3. Are there any repeated words, thoughts, or phrases?
4. List any questions the Lord asks Job.
5. Does God have any accusations against Job?

6. What did you personally expect God to say? Were you surprised by any of God's statements or accusations? Were you disappointed?

Mike Mason wrote, "So let us grant that the speeches at the end of Job do not have anything essentially new or surprising to offer. This is not what makes them stand out. What does? Only one feature sets these chapters apart, and that is the simple fact that it is the Lord Himself and no one else, who speaks them. But that in itself, just think about it, makes all the difference in the world!" He goes on to say, "For the first time in the book a character opens his mouth without any need to explain or rationalize. How refreshing this is, and how mysterious! For God is not a theologian; He is the living God. When He speaks, He does not need to justify Himself. God needs no justification; it is man who needs the justification. Therefore instead of rationalizing, God simply points. He points to the mighty works of His own creation that have been there all along for anyone with eyes to see."

7. So far, how does God's response validate Paul's words in Romans 9:18-21?

8. To close our time together, write your thoughts on these chapters.

Memory Verse of the Week: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33

Second Day

Work on your memory verse. How does this verse excite your soul?

1. Read chapters 38 and 39 again. Does God specifically accuse Job of any sin which he is being punished for?
2. According to verse 2, what does He accuse Job of?
3. Read Job 38:2-3 and 40:7. In your own words, what is God telling Job to do?
4. How on earth does someone "brace themselves" against the Almighty?

I think it's really interesting that even though Job is "God's man" so to speak, he is going to be reproved and rebuked. Although Job was righteous, he was not perfect. But the man who is right with the Lord is not a stranger to rebuke. When someone is "right before God," it doesn't mean they're perfect. It does mean that they accept rebuke and discipline from the Lord. He is about to finally be "in court" with His God and be cross-examined by the Lord Himself. By this time I bet he's shaking like a leaf. What do you think?

Charles Swindoll writes that "God got Job's attention by giving him two 'speeches.' His first is recorded in 38:1-40:5 and His second begins at Job 40:6. His first question was 'Can you explain or control My creation?' This first set of questions deals with Job's intellectual inadequacy. In the next set, God reminds Job of his physical inadequacy by asking, 'Can you change or subdue My creation?'"

God's words are a little different than we would expect. He really doesn't say anything about justice, sin, or punishment. Job wanted acquittal, but that's not where God was going with it! His words reveal His control over all of nature, especially the "wilder" aspect of it.

9. If every morning God took hold of the ends of the earth and shook the wicked out of it (38:12-13), how would that change His character? What would happen to us?

10. After God's statement in 38:18, "Tell Me if you know all this," does God wait for a response from Job?

11. In 38:25-27, God reminds Job that much of what He had created hasn't even been seen or used by humans. Why does He say this? What's His point?

12. In chapter 38, God points out some things that Job "can't" do. What are they? Why does He bring them up?

That's it for today. See you tomorrow, ladies!

Third Day

Work on your memory verse.

In these chapters, we not only see God's sovereignty, but His omnipotence as well (God is all-powerful). These chapters contain some of the best descriptions in Scripture of God's omnipotence, giving us very practical descriptions of a power that is difficult to comprehend. Remember that the purpose of God's words are to make Job realize his own inadequacy and inability to meet God as an equal and defend his cause.

1. Read chapters 38 and 39 again. Take one of the areas that God says He's sovereign over in question 5, above, and describe what He means.
2. What are some ways we see God's "omnipotence" in these chapters?
3. What was God's point in bringing up all the wild animals in 38:39 through 39:30?
4. God doesn't ask Job any questions (personally) in 39:13-18. What is God's point in this section?
5. What does God say about the horse?
6. What does 39:26-30 say about instinct? Summarize this section in your own words.
7. Read Job 40:1-5. How does the Lord wrap it up in verse 2?

Remember how much Job wanted to meet God face to face so he could defend himself in court? Well, God presents His case and gives Job a chance to present his. What will Job say? Is he ready to defend himself?

8. What words in verse 2 does *God* use to describe what Job had been doing until then?

9. How does Job respond to *God* in 40:4-5? Discuss how you think Job felt at that point. How do you think you would have felt?

Job doesn't even try to defend himself at this point. He is almost speechless before Him. He knows he is nothing without *God*, and is in control of nothing in the universe. Job repents before the Almighty, Sovereign *God*.

10. Do you think *God* was being sarcastic, mean and harsh, or, as some have suggested, showing a good-humored jabbing between friends? Discuss your thoughts.

11. How does meditating on *God's* power help you understand the difference between you and *God*? How should that knowledge affect your life?

12. Can you think of any ways that you have tried to control *God*?

13. So far, how have these chapters specifically spoken to your heart? Are there any changes you need to make as a result?

Fourth Day

Meditate on your memory verse, letting the truth of it sink deep into your heart.

1. Read Job 40:1-24. Job had questioned the justice of God. What does God say about this in verses 8-14?

2. What crazy statement does God make to Job in verse 14? If you can do all this.....

God begins His second "speech" to Job after the brief challenge in verses 6-14. Basically He asks Job if he thinks he is capable of bringing justice into the world, or bringing evil under control. Job has no idea what it means to judge the entire world. God then talks about the "*Behemoth*" in 40:15-24 and the "*Leviathan*" in 41:1-34. What, on earth, are those? There are many different interpretations of what the Behemoth really is. Some of the suggestions include hippopotamus, elephant, crocodile, or whale. Not any one creature fits the description completely. The word "Behemoth" in Hebrew means, "beasts." Shepherd's Notes writes, "Behemoth appears to be a kind of composite animal that represents the strength, domain, and independence of the animal world. It is wild, powerful, and free. Behemoth is not a supernatural creature, but it is more than one natural animal. It is a kind of conceptual being, a representative of animal wildness." Some believe that it is a mythical creature. Whatever "it" is, it is supposed to represent the fiercest of the land animals.

3. Read 40:15-24. Describe the characteristics of the Behemoth. What does he look like? What does he eat? (etc.)

4. God is comparing the power of Job with that of the Behemoth. How does Job's measure up? (How about yours?)

"God describes these two absolutely untamable and awesome creatures as though to say 'Not only is My world wild but it is wilder than you ever imagined.' In doing so God reinforced that the dominion exercised by human beings (Genesis 1:26-28) is not absolute, and we will never control or understand everything. God is God and we are not." (Paul Stevens)

5. In what ways do we try to exercise our own power in situations or circumstances we face?
6. Is there something (or someone) today that you are trying to control? Are you ready to let God have it?
7. If you were the judge of the world, do you think you would be able to judge the world justly?
8. Write your thoughts on this section, however bizarre they may be! ☺

We'll end here for today, my friends. May you continue to be reminded that God is God, and we are not. May we surrender to Him and acknowledge that He truly is the Almighty, all-knowing, omnipotent God. Praise His holy Name!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. Read Job 41:1-34. God continues His speech using a new creature, again, comparing its power to Job's. He's reminding Job that his own power can't even begin to come close to this creature's, much less compare to God's. What is it?

"In Canaanite and other ancient myths, this is the seven-headed sea serpent that the god Baal must battle and defeat. However, God may be using this familiar name for a real sea animal, such as the crocodile." (Life Change Series) The word "leviathan" is the transliteration of a Hebrew word, the root of which means "to twist, to writhe." People often used this word to describe various sea monsters. The Jews sometimes used this word to describe their enemies (Isaiah 27:1), especially Egypt (Psalm 74:13-14). In certain mythological writings, the *leviathan* was a many-headed monster that ruled the sea. The description of him is almost scary, definitely putting him in a class of his own.

2. According to verses 1-6, does he seem tamable?
3. Describe how he looks.
4. What words or metaphors are used to describe his strength?
5. Read 41:10-11. What is God's point?
6. What comes out of his mouth according to verses 18-21?

I read a great paragraph that can help us understand a little bit better what's going on. Paul Stevens wrote, "What God wants Job to admit is this: as a creature he does not have the ability to administer his own justice or to vindicate himself. God's references to His own power in creation are fundamental to this. The two nature poems indicate two creatures that a human being would find impossible to tame, a fact significant to Job's underlying problem. Job 40:9 says, "Do you have an arm like God?" To take over the moral administration of the universe Job would have to be as powerful as God. Job knows this, but he has not been able, thus far, to accept the Lord's administration of the world without fretting, without complaining, without reservation. He is struggling to let God be God, and this brings us to the heart of his repentance." (Job's repentance comes next week!)

7. Has God ever used an animal, nature, or some other part of His creation to speak to you? How has He used it to reveal His greatness, majesty, and power?

8. Wiersbe made this statement and I think it's a good one. "Job realized that whatever God does is right and man must accept it by faith." How do you respond to that statement?

The description of Leviathan sounds kind of like a fire breathing dragon, doesn't it? Some scholars that I read believe this to be a description of satan himself. Mike Mason wrote, "While it is true that satan is never named outside the Prologue, this does not mean that the Lord never deals with him. He deals with him here in the form of Leviathan, describing him to Job with the same sort of symbolic picture-language He uses in revelation, where the devil is also portrayed as a great dragon who is to be 'thrown into the Abyss.'" (Revelation 20:2-3)

9. What do you think about that? Hmmmmm.... is all I can say about that!