

SEPTEMBER 1

Job 40-42

Our last day in Job! This will be fun. Reading God's response to Job made me think of what Paul said in Romans 9:20, *But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me thus?"* It finally made sense to me what Paul was saying. He is simply answering this question in Rome with God's answer to Job. It has nothing to do with justice or fairness. Both Paul and God are saying that knowing God means trusting His actions because of His love and wisdom.

One note regarding the wildlife that is described below, remember that after the flood, things changed slowly. There was a massive climate change that resulted in the decline in the age of people and the dying off of certain types of animals. There were few people after the flood, allowing wildlife to grow undisturbed. Some of the types of animals on the ark may have lived for a time after the flood, but the climate and conditions on earth had changed. There were woolly mammoths; but somehow, through climate or the increased needs of growing human populations, they were killed off, similar to buffalo in North America. People lived close to rivers or where there was a supply of water. Although no one knows what the Behemoth and the Leviathan were, they could have been a large variation of something we have today that lived in those rivers and were a constant threat and challenge to the people.

Job 40

Vs. 1-2 The root of Job's problem had been finding fault with God. He accused God of being unjust.

Vs. 3-5 This is the first of Job's two replies to God. In this response he only admits that he shouldn't have spoken. In the next response, Job is repentant.

Vs. 6-14 I think v. 7 is funny. "Gird up your loins" (and fight like a). Obviously Job couldn't contend with God. Really, God has just been asking Job questions.

Vs. 15-24 I have a couple of questions here.

First, what was the Behemoth? It appears to be something that isn't around anymore. It seems that the common opinion is that it was a variety of hippopotamus, sort of what the woolly mammoth was to the elephant. Who knows? Growing up I always saw hippos as docile, fat animals, living to get fat. Well here are some fun facts about hippos. Once they were common to all of Africa, including Egypt and the Nile, and Asia, including the areas around the Euphrates and Jordan rivers, and even Europe. No famous explorer of Africa was **not** attacked by a hippo. One explorer had his boat overturned and had his head and shoulders bit off. Apparently they are incredibly aggressive, and on land they can outrun a man, even weighing 4000 pounds (the hippo, not the man). Now that we can kill them with guns, howitzers and atomic weapons, they are in decline because the ivory of their teeth does not yellow like an elephant's ivory, making it highly sought after. George Washington's teeth were not made of wood, but of hippo ivory. So, if there was a variety of hippo back then that was a little bigger, had a bigger tail and was meaner (imagine that), it could well have been the Behemoth. And apparently their tail does get stiff when they are mad, which apparently is always.

Second, why does God even use this illustration? Well, one reason is that they were apparently a hazard to anyone living along rivers, which was a lot of people. Another reason might be to mention that God made this very formidable animal that gave hunting parties fits. But for me it has more to do with the theme of the book: the hidden purpose of God. What was the purpose of that animal? Why did God make it? Who knows, but God knew and designed it as He chose.

Job 41

Enter the Leviathan. Apparently this was another river dweller, and again the identity is unknown. It is thought that this could have been a very, very large "mammoth," and arrogantly aggressive, variety of crocodile.

Vs. 1-11 This section deals with the Leviathan's inability to be tamed, caught or ruled. Notice expressions like, *can you*, or *will you*. This could be entitled "The Attitude of the Leviathan."

Vs. 12-34 This could be titled the "The Body of the Leviathan." This is how God made him.

Vs. 18-21 It is suggested that this could be poetic description of a crocodile coming up for air in the bright sun, the *light* in its eyes, the *smoke* coming out of its nostrils as it lets out air on the surface of the water creating a blowing of vapor that looked like smoke and fire.

Again, even a nature lover might ask God why He made the Leviathan. Would it really be a loss if they went extinct? Does anyone "miss" the T-Rex? If you had lived near a river, you would never have let your kids go play at the shore if these things were around. It would have always been on your mind, and trying to exterminate them would have been a generational endeavor.

In both of these animals God challenges Job with His power to create, to control and to determine the working out of lives and the affairs of men by what He did with these animals. In a way, Satan might be compared to these animals in his influence on mankind; but there too, God has a leash on Lucifer. God's love and wisdom simply need to be trusted.

Job 42

Vs. 1-6 Notice that Job quotes God twice; he confesses and repents.

Vs. 7-9 This is pretty interesting. God calls Job his servant four times. God says twice that Job spoke rightly of Him, but the others did not. It never says that the friends prayed for Job, but Job prayed for them. God was not upset with Elihu. It is interesting that God made Job forgive and intercede for his friends. It is amazing in the Gospels how often prayer and extending forgiveness to others are put together. *And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.* (Mark 11:25)

So how was Job right about what he said about God? He was right in saying that his suffering didn't come because of sin. He was wrong in charging God with judgment against him. For Job to say that God didn't care was careless. Job held on irrationally to what he had known to be true of God. His losses and pain pushed him, and his friends incited him; but Job never cursed God, so Satan was able to see that there was something in mankind that God could save. Job and his friends were able to see the Lord in a different light. Always trust the Lord. His love never fails and the wisdom of His will is guided by that love and by His incredible wisdom.

Vs. 10-11 Notice the "condition" in v. 10. It wasn't until after Job prayed for his friends that the Lord reversed Job's situation. Now the Lord brought on all of the comfort He had withheld. It was the Lord.

Vs. 12-17 Notice that it never mentioned any of Job's kids' names except these three daughters.

Tradition suggests that Job was 70 when this happened to him. And just as his prosperity was doubled after this event, so was his age. That is the suggested reason that he lived another 140 years.

As you read Job now, year after year, you will find new stuff each time you read it. Not only that, as you follow Christ in the harvest, as things happen to you and to others, what you've learned here will be used by the Spirit to teach you and to temper your heart. He will lead you to have a more eternal perspective on this life, and the Lord will lead you into more and more situations where you will learn to let go of expectations in this life on earth. As we follow Christ

we learn to trust Him completely and to make Him and what we know of Him enough to guide us through anything that happens.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

This is a very well-known and cool part of the Bible. And to think, all of this is being expressed like this because of Paul's suffering and a conflict he's having with a church. It was all designed by God's wisdom.

V. 11 Notice that Paul talks about their turmoil and its result as *the fear of the Lord*. In this context, I would say that this fear is Paul's deep respect for God. And, Paul understood that he was *known to God*. Paul would never violate God's trust and cheapen the gospel. This is their motivation for persuading others. The message of that persuasion, we'll see later, is for people to repent and be reconciled with God. Paul tried to remain invisible.

V. 12 Note that the criticism in Corinth that is against Paul and that was shredding the church is ever present in Paul's mind as he is writing. It was a weight that Paul constantly bore. Paul was not trying to promote himself. He was living to promote His Savior and to see men saved and made disciples in the harvest. The Corinthians should have known this and been able to counter those self-seeking super-apostles, whose main platform was criticizing Paul.

Vs. 13-15 This shows that Paul understood the necessity of God making them weak. But instead of being driven by concern for themselves or driven by fear, look what controlled them. And look what it made them do. A disciple is always oriented to the harvest, because *the love of Christ* is living in his heart and is revealed in the harvest. If anyone ever wants to know what the driving force behind our hearts and actions is, it is here. It is not a fear of hell or a desire for heaven; it is the love of Christ. Check your heart. This has to be or become what ultimately motivates you in your life.

V. 16 Paul once regarded Jesus as the enemy and His followers as heretics. That was before he understood what was happening "spiritually" in the world and in the plan of God. Now Paul said, *we walk by faith, not by sight* (2 Cor. 5:7). Our eyes are to be on the spiritual reality, and then we can understand the physical in terms of the spiritual. Another way to say this is what Paul says in Romans 8:14, *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God*. We live on earth now understanding things spiritually, seeking spiritual direction, being led daily by the Spirit.

V. 17 Notice that this is a *creation*, something made. Salvation is not membership in a club, where membership can be revoked due to bad behavior. It is being made, created. At salvation something is brought into life. This is why once we are saved or "created," we are always saved. You can revoke someone's membership, but you can't "un-create" something. This spiritual life is created by the Spirit the moment we confess Christ as Savior and are forgiven. Then the Spirit comes to dwell within to "mentor" and nurture that new spiritual life, and to help us deal with that old nature that would destroy us.

Vs. 18-21 Two things here. Disciples are always oriented to the harvest. *Ambassadors* is who God made us. To deny who God has made us is to get ourselves into a life to which we were not called or equipped. Our joy and strength and purpose are found in following Christ in the harvest as His *ambassadors*.

Second, Paul is making sure they understand that this ministry is not something we grasp, but something that grips us. Paul wasn't putting himself forward, as if this were his career. Paul describes this life following Christ and speaking out to the lost as the irresistible identity of anyone who has been seized by the love of Christ.

V. 21 This might have been a reminder to that Jewish audience and to those super-apostles that righteousness is not found in doing things Jewish, but in Christ alone. What a great truth and just like Isaiah 53.

Psalm 45

Now, I'm really not given to "spiritualizing" the meaning of the text, saying its real meaning is in something other than the physical event to which it was written. However, there is a prophetic element in lots of the Bible where a verse or event foreshadows something in the future. God shows us this is so. When we get to the NT and see some of the passages that Jesus or others used, we look back and say, "I would have never guessed that would also have a meaning for the future."

This psalm was apparently written for a wedding. But when you get to v. 6, you realize that this is quoted in Hebrews 1:8, *But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom."* God is saying that this verse has to do with Jesus being crowned king. This is also when He takes the church as His bride. So then, let's read the entire psalm as if it is referring to Jesus taking His throne and meeting with His church at the wedding feast.

Vs. 1-3 If you compare this with Isaiah 53 or Revelation 5:6 where no beauty is mentioned, it seems that Jesus' full glory will be revealed.

Vs. 4-5 That crowning of Jesus and the taking of the book will unleash judgment on the nations and peoples of the earth.

Vs. 6-9 This would be an appropriate image of Jesus, the Son of David, receiving His eternal throne.

Vs. 10-15 I have never grasped the "bride of Christ" except to know it is a special designation of purity and glory to the bridegroom.

Vs. 16-17 This is definitely imagery referring to Jesus. Look at the end of Isaiah 53 to see this shared reward and glory. I just read what Jesus said to His disciples the night He was betrayed. *You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* (Luke 22:28-30)

Proverbs 22:14

There really is no such thing as "getting away" with something. If God lets you kick against the door until you "succeed," you are just walking into judgment, not blessing.