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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Job 38.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Job 38.

Topics.

- Out of a whirlwind the LORD says to Job, "Dress for action like a man."
- God asks job a multitude of questions.
- Pleiades, Orion, Mazzaroth and a bear with its children.
- God continues asking Job a multitude of questions.
- Wisdoms invitation and Job's sin.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone.

In the depths of agony he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38–41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

Helpful facts: before reading Job it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9). The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

The LORD speaks

Out of a Whirlwind the LORD says to Job, "Dress for Action like a Man."

Job 38:1-3 ----- ¹Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ²"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me (answer thou me in KJV).

The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind carries the idea of God answering Job out of a dark and thick cloud. God is often represented in Scripture as speaking to people from a dark and thick cloud. He perhaps speaks to Job in this manner for the following three reasons: -

1. If God appeared to us in our fallen sinful state His glory would destroy us so He has to veil Himself when He appears to man.
2. Veiling Himself in dark clouds was the usual method of manifesting Himself to men in those times.

3. To humble and awaken Job and his friends to the seriousness of what He is about to say and to give His words greater majesty.

The LORD says that Job's speeches have been without knowledge this does not refer to natural human knowledge, but to the knowledge of the entire universe, the sun, moon, stars and creation and complete knowledge of God himself and His ways. Another way of saying the same thing would be to write Job's speeches have been bound and limited by man's mortal and limited knowledge and understanding of God and of the entire universe and creation and of God's ways with mankind on earth etc.

Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? (v2) the words, "Who is this?" could be answered with Job's own words "A man born of a woman of a few of days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1) a dying, exhausted and feeble man.

God's counsel: embraces God's foreordained plans, purposes and promises that he established in His eternal mind before the world began and His word and commandments and His decrees and judgments, but primarily refers to God's ways and dealings with Job which has been the matter under debate in all the previous chapters. The great dispute between Job and his friends was concerning God's counsel, and purpose, in afflicting Job and though they endeavoured to find and answer and explain Job's suffering according to their own knowledge and reasoning neither Job nor his friends could since God's purposes were hidden from them.

Darkening the counsel of God carries the following three ideas: -

1. Speaking without knowledge and understanding, but with authority empty words of obscurity that have no value to those listening.
2. Attempting to explain the secret and hidden counsel of God by human reasoning.
3. Speaking words that instead of giving insight and shining light on God and His ways misrepresent Him.

Job and his counsellors Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu were all guilty of darkening the counsel of God, from their own lack of wisdom and understanding of God's dealings with Job, they relied upon their own reasoning and thereby Job had no answers and Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu were totally wrong in their accusations that Job was a wicked and corrupt man.

Instead of helping and comforting Job his counsellors added to his sorrow and in this way they also darkened the counsel of God. No one should think too harshly of Job since he spoke honestly of how he was feeling in his heart, mind and emotions things that many of the faithful would think and feel if they were in his circumstances. Added to this he was speaking from ignorance and error and not from malice or rage against God as Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu spoke against Job. Despite Job and his counsellors lack of wisdom there are many lessons of faith and wisdom that we can learn from the story of Job.

Speaking words without knowledge: carries the idea of speaking about God's counsel and divine wisdom and His workings in our life and on the earth and His way with the climate and the heavens as though we have a clear understanding of such things and the ways of God. Job and his counsellors obviously had a great knowledge of Scripture, yet in all their speech did not make anything clearer concerning God's dealings with Job than when they first spoke.

There is much of this kind of speaking spoken in debate, in preaching, and in conversation, that explains nothing and often leaves those listening more perplexed than they were before. God cannot approve of such empty words since they achieve nothing, but are as it were, words in the wind. When words are spoken in God's name they should encourage, uplift, comfort, correct, and always be spoken in a manner that exalts God's name and puts Him in the right whether we understand His ways and His works or not.

The right response for Job would have been to speak words that inspire confidence in God and rather than desire to stand before Him and reason his case with Him, to submit to His divine dealings. If job was guilty of any sin it would be the sin of planting doubt to others in the wisdom of God's sovereign workings on earth and thinking he could contend with the Almighty.

God is about to be Job's vindicator and abundantly bless him, but He must first bring him to a right state of mind. Job wrongly craved understanding of God's ways and passionately desired that God explain Himself to him when the right attitude would have been to submit to God's working in his life. God rather than vindicating Himself to Job humbles Job by shining a brilliant spotlight upon the enormous lack of his knowledge of God and of the littleness of his knowledge concerning creation the universe and of the pride of man.

When we are in doubt to what is happening in our lives and we have done all we can do, but still have no control over our circumstance great faith does not doubt and question God and if we are tempted to complain about and question God we should heed the voice of wisdom which shouts "Exalt and adore silence." (i.e., don't speak). If we are suffering a trial or hardship that we have no control over as Job was the only way to find peace is to accept it and rather than spend all our time complaining adjust our life accordingly.

Dress for action like a man: (v3) (Gird up now your loins in the KJV) the expression, "Gird up the loins," has an allusion to the style of dress in eastern countries that was commonly worn. During Jobs era the men would wear long and loose flowing robes which they would fasten with a girdle when running or labouring or engaged in conflict.

The idea here is, "Make yourself as strong and courageous as possible and make yourself ready to debate the case with me, as you have often wished to do, for I am about to ask you questions concerning creation and the universe and expect you to make known to me the answers.

God humbled Job by highlighting His eternal being against Jobs mortal being; His knowledge of all things against Job's vast lack of it; His almighty power against Job's own weakness and His great wisdom against Jobs extreme lack of it.

God asks Job a multitude of questions.

Job 38:4-15 ----- 4"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8"Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11and said, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed?" 12"Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. 15From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken.

Simply and briefly put the LORD is basically saying to Job: -

- Where you around when I laid the foundation of the earth?
- Did you determine the foundations of the earth and its measurements?
- Did you lay the cornerstone of the earth?
- Did you shut in the sea with borders and make clouds its garments?
- Did you command the dawn so that it takes hold of the borders of the earth?
- Can you shake the wicked from the earth and mould the planet like a garment?

With these questions (and many more to come) God shows in brilliant light the extreme lack and absolute emptiness of human knowledge, it strikes Job's heart and so humbles him that he is not only without answers, but also struck silent. God in His great wisdom puts an end to Job's words without any debate. This is fascinating when it is considered in previous chapters Job stated that he had prepared his case should he have the opportunity to stand before the LORD and now when he does get the opportunity he rather than speak is struck silent.

God continues asking Job a multitude of questions.

Job 38:16-30 ----- 16"Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? 18Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this. 19"Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, 20that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? 21You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great! 22"Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, 23which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? 24What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth? 25"Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, 26to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man, 27to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass? 28"Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? 30Waters become hard like stone, the face of the deep is frozen.

Again, simply and briefly put the LORD is basically saying to Job: -

- Have you walked amongst the springs of the deep of the sea?
- Do you understand the deep darkness and the way of death?
- Do you comprehend the expanse of the earth?
- Do you know the way to light and the place of darkness?
- Do you know the number of your days?
- Have you entered the storehouses of the snow and hail?
- Do you know where light is distributed and where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?
- Have you ever controlled the rain over waste lands and caused grass to grow?
- Do you know how ice was created or given birth to the frost?

The LORD asks Job if he knows all the answers to these questions then declare them to Him (v18). Imagine for a moment how Job would be feeling, he is standing dumbfounded before some form of whirlwind (perhaps in the form of a pillar of cloud much like God spoke to Moses out of) and the LORD is asking him a multitude of questions from it and he can't even answer one of them. Ponder how you would feel in the same position, especially if you had spent a great amount of time questioning God's ways and wishing He would explain Himself to you as Job had done.

The time of trouble: the LORD asks Job, if he has seen the storehouses of the hail that He has reserved for the time of trouble and the day of battle and war? (v22-23). In the Old Testament God used hail to punish those who denied Him, resisted His ways and oppressed others to expand their own royal or religious empire and he used hail against the prideful Pharaoh of Egypt to destroy Egypt's livestock and crops and set His people free.

- He destroyed their (Egypt's) vines with hail and their sycamores with frost. ⁴⁸He gave over their cattle to the hail and their flocks to thunderbolts. ⁴⁹He let loose on them his burning anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels. (Psalm 78:47-49) (Psalm 105:32-33) (Exod. 9:18-19) (Exod. 9:22-26).

Contained within God's words "I have stored up hail for the time of trouble" (v23) there maybe a faint echo of the Day of Judgment that in the latter days is to come upon the earth that the following verses from the book of Revelation speak off: -

- The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. (Rev. 8:7).
- The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11:15).
- God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (Rev. 11:19).
- Great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe. (Rev. 16:21).

Pleiades, Orion, Mazzaroth and a Bear with its children.

Job 38:31-35 ----- ³¹"Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? ³²Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? (Arcturus with his sons in KJV) ³³Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? ³⁴"Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? ³⁵Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'?"

Pleiades: comes from the Hebrew word (*Kiyimah*) it literally means a cluster of stars it refers to the seven stars of Pleiades.

Orion: comes from the Hebrew word (*K^eciyl*) it can refer to any notable constellation, but especially refers to the constellation Orion.

Mazzaroth: comes from the Hebrew word (*mazzarah*) it carries the sense of distinction and refers to some noted constellation, perhaps collectively the zodiac.

The Bear with its children: (Arcturus with his sons in KJV) the word Arcturus comes from the Hebrew word (*'Ayish*), it refers to the constellation of the Great Bear (perhaps from its migration through the heavens). Again, simply and briefly put the LORD is basically saying to Job: -

- Can you bind and loose the chains of the three constellations of the heavens Pleiades, Orion and Mazzaroth?
- Do you know and understand the rules and laws governing the heavens?
- Can you control the influence of Pleiades, Orion and Mazzaroth on the earth?
- Can you speak to the clouds and cause a flood of waters to cover you?
- Can you send forth lightning, that it goes forth and says to you, 'Here we are'?

It becomes very clear why the LORD said to Job, "Dress yourself for action," (v3) imagine how humbled and foolish Job would be feeling by now to think that God should have to explain and vindicate Himself to him. Though Job's desire to have God explain Himself to him was a great offence to the Almighty He does not come to God with anger or condemnation, but instead simply humbles him, by highlighting to Job his extreme lack of knowledge and wisdom and the foolishness of thinking God should explain Himself to him.

God continues asking Job a multitude of questions.

Job 38:36-41 ----- ³⁶Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind? ³⁷Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, ³⁸when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? ³⁹"Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, ⁴⁰when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? ⁴¹Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food?

Again, simply and briefly put the LORD is basically saying to Job: -

- Can you put wisdom and understanding in the human mind?
- Can you number the clouds and control the climate and the weather?
- Can you provide food for the lions and the birds and satisfy the appetite of their young?

When the LORD asked Job, "Who has put wisdom and gives understanding to the human mind," (v36) it would primarily refer to wisdom and understanding concerning God Himself and His ways the answer of course is God. It is God who gives wisdom and understanding to the humble and the upright and who withholds it from the prideful and the wicked. (Job 38:15).

Concerning wisdom the Scripture state: God possessed wisdom at the beginning of His work, the first of His acts (Prov. 8:22-31) God has always existed, and wisdom existed before creation, God used wisdom to create everything that He created. Nothing that is made is made without wisdom, everything that exists including the human mind; the thoughts; the subconscious and the conscious mind all exist by wisdom.

The prideful stand like proud peacocks, with all their knowledge, but put that knowledge before the knowledge of God and suddenly it looks enormously pathetic, how pitiful is are the prideful especially when they exalt their intellect above God.

Wisdom loves those who love her (Prov. 8:17) and says, "Whoever seeks me is going to find me," this shines a spotlight on the truth that it takes study and reading as well as humbleness to listen to others to gain wisdom it is not going to drop out of heaven. If a person seeks after wisdom it will give them mental and spiritual strength, insight and the ability to counsel. Wisdom not only speaks the truth, noble things, righteousness and what is good and right (Prov. 8:5-9), but also establishes good kings, rulers' princes and nobles, with the ability to do right and govern justly, who the people they rule over will favour. (Prov. 8:14-17).

Wisdom is more valuable than silver and gold (Prov. 8:10-11), because with wisdom comes enduring righteousness; honour before God and man (Prov. 8:18-21). If it were possible to build a house on earth with the fruits of wisdom it would by far surpass the most glorious palace built with cedars of Lebanon and the finest of gold and choice silver.

This is because it is guaranteed wisdom will not only lead a person to God, to eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory and keep them from all sorts of troubles, crime and wrongdoing, but also fill their mind and heart with contentment, peace and God's love. In contrast to this all the riches in the world cannot guarantee any of these things and certainly cannot buy eternal life.

Like perfect love wisdom has no sin or any wrong-doing within it, her fruit is justice, fairness, impartiality, even-handedness, honesty and integrity, wisdom is no respecter of people it treats everyone with fairness and honest justice regardless of whether they are kings or paupers, rich or poor, lowly or noble wisdom. Added to this whoever finds wisdom finds life and obtains favour from God (Prov. 8:32-36) not simply by knowing wisdoms ways, but by also doing them.

Those who keep wisdom's ways by doing what is right and good before God and keeping His laws and showing kindness and compassion to others will have favour from the LORD in this world and will be counted worthy of eternal life in the world to come, but all who choose to deliberately do harm to others and refuse to do what is good, right and decent bring upon themselves God's judgment and condemnation to the lake of fire (a symbol of eternal death) (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction). It could be said that they by their lack of wisdom and corrupt works are digging their own graves.

For further information concerning the lake of fire, see the title: -

- Lake of Fire in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Wisdoms invitation: wisdom is personified as a woman seated in the highest of places who dwells in a most royal palace and has set a table of the finest of wine and the most delicate of foods raising her voice and sending out invitations to all the foolish everywhere inviting them to leave their unwise and reckless ways and come and eat and drink at her rich banquet table, because she desperately wants to pass her gifts onto everyone everywhere. (Proverbs 8:1-4). (Proverbs 9:1-6).

Likewise the faithful who belong to the global family of Christ go forth with the Gospel to invite sinners and the unwise to be their guests at the banquet table of Christ. The Gospel shuts no man or woman out that does not shut themselves out by rejecting the invitation. Jesus himself said, "I came, not to call the self-righteous who see themselves as being righteous in their own eyes, who say they see, but do not, but sinners who recognise and acknowledge that they are not perfect in righteousness before God's Holiness.

Those who listen to wisdoms advice and accept her invitation and turn into her house, and become her guest are wise for themselves since it will not only profit their present peace and comfort, but also advantage their future prosperity and happiness and by their wisdom their families, friends and neighbours will also benefit. But the unwise and the wicked that reject wisdoms invitation will bear the blame and reap the consequences of their own foolishness and no one else. God's punishment due to them will fall upon them only. They alone will reap the punishment of their own evil and feel all the dreadful consequences of it. (Proverbs 9:12).

Job is humbled: as wise a man as Job was he could not even begin to answer the questions of Most High concerning His hidden counsels and workings and the many questions that pertained to creation and the universe. He is humbled and struck dumb and God has not yet finished asking Job questions.

Job's sin: was not that he was a prideful self-righteous, hypocrite or a wicked and corrupt man as Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu accused him of being, but that he desired that God explain and vindicate Himself to him. The created creature was demanding that its maker justifies Himself to the one He had created. Much of the unbelief in the world is because those created from the dust of the earth by the hands of the Eternal Being do not understand His works under the sun on earth and use this lack of understanding as a reason or excuse to deny God.

Now Job in all his confusion and lack of understanding never denied God, nor did he ever have doubt that God loved him (though he did feel God had hidden His love) and rather than Job being weak in faith he proved himself to be truly great and amazingly strong in faith considering his circumstances. The thing that God held against Job had nothing to do with self-righteousness or wickedness, but that Job demanded God explain Himself, this is the reason God asked Job a multitude of questions that he could not answer.

God was basically saying, "Job if you can answer these questions then I will explain myself to you, but if you cannot then it shows that you are so lacking in knowledge and understanding that it would be impossible to explain my ways to you. It would be like a brilliant Bible scholar trying to explain in detail the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation to a two year old child.

The Bible pictures God as a Master Potter and we as the clay and the work of His hands as the following Scriptures show: -

- But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8).
- The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²"Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." ³So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. (Jer. 18:1-4).

No potter moulds their clay with the intention of making it into a vessel that was less than what it was when they began, but rather spend much time and skill to enhance their work so that it becomes a thing of value and beauty. Likewise the intention of God the Master Potter is to mould us into a vessel that would become His treasured possession.

Following is Job's final confession: -

- I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.' ⁵I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you (Job 42:31-5).

These final words of Job show that God the Master Potter brilliantly accomplished what he set out to achieve and it is certain if we were to ask Job today if Job had any regrets he would say, "Definitely not," for now he knows God in a manner that he never knew Him before and for the faithful such knowledge is worth more than all the riches this world has to offer.

End.