

God's Response
Part Two
Job 40:6 – 42:6
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MI: God's justice is every bit as incomprehensible as His sovereignty and wisdom.

Introduction

- Recently, I watched “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Galaxy” with some of our youth. In this story, a group of people gathers together and builds the best computer ever built to determine the ultimate answer to life. “What is the meaning of the universe, life, and everything?” they ask. The computer seeks some clarification, so the people tell it that they want to know the answer to life’s ultimate question. They want to know The Answer. Preferably some short, simple, and without too many big words.
- The computer responds that it will take 7.5 million years to tackle this problem. They return in 7.5 millions years and address the computer, “Have you answered the question?”.
- The computer replies, “Well, yes... but you’re not going to like it”.
- The people exchange troubled looks, but carry on unabated, “Well, what is it?”
- With a dramatic flourish, the computer speaks “Okay, but don’t say I didn’t warn you. The Ultimate answer to life, the universe, and everything... The answer to the Ultimate Question is... 42”
- The people are incredulous “42! 42! What kind of answer is that?” The computer responds, “I think the problem, to be quite honest with you, is that you’ve never actually known what the question is.”
- From a human perspective, the story of Job boils down to, “How can bad things happen to good people?” But if we turn back to the beginning of Job, we find the divine perspective. Satan’s challenge to God is “Will good people trust God even though bad things happen?”
- That is the question that the book of Job seeks to answer and as we explore our passage today, we will answer that question.

I. God's Response (40:6 – 41:34)

A. God's Actions reveal His sovereignty and wisdom.

- i. Vs. 6-14 contain many legal terms. Job has on several occasions used the same language himself but now God is turning the court case on its head! He says to Job “Don’t you realize that you are on the witness stand and not me? You are here to honor me! I am not here to be questioned by you!”
- ii. If you really think it ought not to be this way, then do something about it Job! Array yourself in splendor, cast down the wicked and lift up the oppressed!

- iii. But of course Job cannot. So Job's only course is to condemn himself that God might be justified, a course of action taken by David when confronted with his sins. Turn to Psalm 51:3&4.
 - iv. God's judgment is upheld by His actions. He condemned Sodom & Gomorrah and showed his power by raining fire on them. He challenged Baal at Mt. Carmel and He answered with fire.
 - v. The fact is that God can walk the talk and Job cannot. All these things show God's sovereignty and wisdom.
- B. God's creation reveals His sovereignty and wisdom.
- i. Beginning in 40:15 to the end of chapter 41 God returns us to the natural world to prove His point. God lays Behemoth and Leviathan before Job to show him that if just two of his creatures command so much fear, how much more their Creator?
 - ii. Now of course, we read this today and the question we are all asking is "What's a behemoth? What's a leviathan?"
 - iii. Well, I don't think God ever intended a zoological lesson for its own sake here, but we should seek to understand what He is talking about. To the best of my knowledge a Behemoth is a Hippopotamus. It seems to fit the description in the Ch.40 with the only possible exception being that of moving its tail like a cedar.
 - iv. Now picturing the hippo as a fearsome beast might be hard for you because you are thinking of something like this first slide. Despite its popularity in zoos and cuddly portrayal as gentle giants in fiction, (show next slide) the hippopotamus is among the most dangerous and aggressive of all mammals. In next slide we see that many locals will attest to that.
 - v. Carrying on, the description of the Leviathan actually coincides very closely with that of a large Nile Crocodile. Again the only problem with the description is in 41:19-21, where it is described as a fire-breathing animal. Is it possible that these are actually animals that no longer exist? Yes, but again this is not so much a lesson about zoology as it is about God's nature.
 - vi. Both these animals hold no commercial value or companionable interest for humans. They are simply illustrations that there are beasts we cannot tame, animals we can't control.
 - vii. If there are things in this world that we can only view with fear and incomprehension, then they point to a Creator who has created for His pleasure and purpose and not ours. A Creator whose ways are beyond our ways.
 - viii. How vast and unsearchable are the ways of God! In His sovereignty and wisdom, He has created the world around us. In this speech God is driving it home that He is sovereign and wise, in all He does and in all He has made. Now let's look at Job's response.

II. Job Response (42:1-6)

- A. Job acknowledges God's greatness.
 - i. Simply put Job is overwhelmed. Trying to match strength and wisdom with God is like trying to drink from a fire hose.
 - ii. Read 42:2.
 - iii. The fact that God even speaks shows Job that God is not silent. While Job thought he had a case, as soon as God speaks, any such pretension dissolves.
 - iv. God's choice of topics reminds him that God is not at Job's beck and call. He is above that. God's entire discourse to Job is peppered with rhetorical questions. Again and again God is forcing Job to answer. And Job realizes that his only response can to admit God's greatness and then to acknowledge his own error.
- B. Job acknowledges his error.
 - i. Read 42:3-6.
 - ii. God uses hardship to re-arrange our priorities. Read James 1:2-4. Job had not counted his trials a joy, but he acknowledges his impatience and repents. While patience may not have had its perfect work in Job, as Matthew Henry points out, repentance was able to finish the task. Read James 5:11. God used this situation to shape Job in a way that pleased God.

* And we are in the same situation. The picture that stirs my mind is from Alice in Wonderland. Three gardeners, the Two, Five, and Seven of Spades are interrupted in their work by the Queen's procession. They immediately fall completely prostrate on the ground. They are so flat in fact that the Queen cannot even tell who they are, being face down and being cards. They all look the same. Just as the cards had to all respond in the same way, so too must we. Our experience must mirror Job's. *

III. Your Response

- A. Open your eyes to God's nature.
 - i. Read Job 42:5. Notice the distinct contrast in these two sentences. There is something lifeless about the first sentence. The experience is in the past (I have heard), it is second hand (heard of you), and it is sounds purely factual (of you).
 - ii. "But now my eye sees You". The climax of the entire book of Job, comes in experiencing God Himself, first hand, in the present.
 - iii. In my first year of college, I lived on the opposite side of campus from our classrooms. There were no sidewalks for about ½ the distance and in the winter the path became quite slick with ice. If you wanted to get to class without bumps and bruises, it meant you had to keep your head down and your eyes fixed on the next step in front of you. This is what life seems to demand of us.

Keep your head down and plod along. But occasionally, on my walk to class, something would catch the corner of my eye and I would stop and realize that all around me the sunrise had turned the entire sky into such a blaze of color that I was sure no human hand would ever be able to reproduce it.

- iv. God is orchestrating those “Wow!” moments around us everyday, we just have to stop and open our eyes to God’s nature. Job had the wild beasts all around Him, but it wasn’t until God opened his eyes that Job was overcome with the wonder of it all.

B. Open your hearts to God’s rule.

- i. Act of submission. Volitional.
- ii. In part, the second discourse of God comes because Job makes no response after the first. He is simply silent. God does not want to grind Job under his thumb. He wants Job to acknowledge Him as ruler. iii. That is why the climax of the book does not actually come at the point where God finally speaks, but when Job submits himself to God.

Conclusion

- Many of us are waiting for the wrong climax. We are asking the wrong question. We are waiting for that moment in life when God speaks and everything is fine. But perhaps the more momentous event in us confessing, “God is God and He is good!”
- Everything He does and everything He has made shout this to us. Job saw God’s goodness and repented of His error. We have the choice to respond as Job did, to open our eyes to wonders of God and submit to His rule or we can keep asking the wrong questions.
- As we come to our time of contemplation and reflection, we have an opportunity to worship God. To tell Him how glorious and good He is. To lift His name on high. Not so we can feel connected to Him, not so everything will seem right in the world, not so we can have our questions answers. But so that God can be praised, as He ought to be.
- Take a moment and consider the world around, that which has come into being from God’s hand. Allow its wonder to soak into your soul and bloom adoration of what a great God we serve.