

## Out of the Whirlwind

Job 38:1–41

Job is a righteous man who suffered deeply and couldn't understand what he had done to deserve what he was going through. In chapter 28, Job is marching back and forth, eager to present his case to God and to prove his innocence so he can get God's final fair judgement. Maybe Job thought God would say we have made a mistake and we will correct it right away, but that is not what happens. In Job chapter 38, finally God begins to talk.

The book of Job is the authors' attempt to answer the question, "Why do good people suffer?" This is an age-old question and one that many people have tried to answer. In the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter, we find that God does not answer WHY bad things happen to good people but tells Job to remember who God is as the one who created the heavens and the earth and to know God is with Job and is bigger than we can imagine and all the bad things that we experience.

Job finds out in his conversation with God that God is totally different than he expected. Job encounters God in an unexpected way, "in the midst of a whirlwind."

It's frustrating to ask a direct question without getting a direct answer; as is the case so often with politicians, doctors, and lawyers, where many significant statements are made, but few direct answers are given. We also have this experience in the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter of Job, where after Job asked a direct question to God, "Why, Lord, must the innocent suffer?", not even God seems willing to give a clear and direct answer in response.

God says: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding, who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?"

The Lord answers Job this way, and in one sense this stanza of God's poetic non-answer makes Job and all his problems seem so very small—the death of his family, the destruction of his home—like a blip in everything throughout creation. But this account of creation in the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter of Job is more than that. It is the story of how God has been in the business of building up beauty out of nothing since the beginning of time. The formless mass of nothingness was the Lord's building blocks, and when there was darkness, before there were even lights to turn out, the Lord laid the cornerstone, and the morning stars were born to sing together.

Can you hear the Lord say, "The sea was like chaos, but I grabbed that great chaos up and tucked it in safely at night; so even now, the chaos that you face, the sadness, the despair and the heartache—just as I tamed the sea, so I will bring order to your life once more."

Job also got an invitation to trust God, an invitation that is extended to you and me. The good news of this part of Job's story is God tells Job and us that in the midst of everything we experience, God still loves us. God in God's compassion spoke to Job, and in his speaking, God shows again God's desire to live in loving relationship with us.

Is this scripture a direct answer to our questions? Not exactly, but in this passage is perspective. "The young lions were hungry, and God satisfied their appetites. The ravens cried aloud to God, and God provided. Will I not do the same for you?" This is the hope and promise God gives Job and us.

Think About it – Pray about it – Live it

*Bob*