

God's Speech – Part 3

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – God answers Job and his friends by exalting his sovereign greatness over all things
2. aim – To cause us to see the sovereignty of God over every aspect of our lives
3. passage – Job 38:1-41:34

b. outline

1. God's Sovereignty Over Creation (Job 38:1-39:30)
2. Job's Response to God's Questions (Job 40:1-5)
3. God's Sovereignty Over Man (Job 40:6-41:34)

c. opening

1. the **entry of God** into the discussion
 - a. **consideration #1/3**: the answer to the *question* of Job's suffering: **who God is**
 - b. **consideration #2/3**: sometimes the "storms" in life are designed to show us the greatness of God
 - c. **consideration #3/3**: this speech is the *reason* for the heavenly council, etc.
 1. **i.e.** why this book is *in the Canon of Scripture*
2. the **structure** of the speech of God (**in two halves**)
 - a. in **chaps. 38-39**, God **asks Job** a series of *rhetorical questions* about what he has created, and whether Job was involved in the design of each element (**by implication**)
 1. or, the sovereignty of God **over creation** (**i.e.** no one dares question his power or his *morality*)
 - b. in **chaps 40-41**, God **rebukes Job** for elevating himself to the position of "god", asking *another* series of *rhetorical questions* regarding his power and position (**more directly**)
 1. or, the sovereignty of God **over man** (**i.e.** no one dares question his authority *or his intentions*)
 - c. **so far in Part 1**: where were *you*, O Job, when I (the Creator) established the foundations of the world; when I created the building blocks of the universe; when the angelic audience "*shouted for joy*" at the order, beauty, or purpose in it all?

I. God's Sovereignty Over Creation (Job 38:1-39:30)

Content

c. God questions Job about his role in creating the world (38:4-38)

1. **again**: we will *not* be going "verse-by-verse" through everything in this speech
 - a. because ... God's *intention* in this speech is to "rapid fire" a series of questions at Job, each one designed to keep him "off balance" in his *puny* nature as a *creature* (**i.e.** as one *from* the earth)
 - b. meaning ... the *purpose* of the speech is not to describe God's work *in detail*, but to point out that *no one except God* can possibly understand how it was formed and what it entails
 - c. **IOW**: such a "scientific" analysis would **miss the point of the speech** – **i.e.** our inability to truly "know" *and understand* the details is *exactly* the point God is making before Job ...
 - d. so ... my approach will be simply to read and "consider" (**very briefly**) each section of this speech (**first half this week**), and then make an observation about its *relevance* to us ...
2. **observation (again)**: in many ways, God's speech "mirrors" the creation account of **Genesis 1**
 - a. the *foundations* of the earth (**38:4-7 cf. Genesis 1:1-10**)
 1. **last week**: the "*foundations*" (with their "*measurements*"), the "*bases*", its "*cornerstone*"
 2. similar to the description of the establishment of light (**1:3-4**), day and night (**1:5**), the expanse (**1:6-8**), and the formation of the unique planet, Earth (**1:9-10**)
 - b. the *ecosystems* of the earth (**38:8-38 cf. Genesis 1:11-23**)
 1. **now**: the "*sea*" (along with the "*deep*"), the "*morning*" (along with "*light*" and "*darkness*"), the "*snow*", "*hail*", "*rain*" (along with the "*clouds*" and "*floods*"), and the "*stars*"
 2. similar to the description of the creation of dry land (**1:9-10**), vegetation (**1:11-13**), and the "*lights in the expanse*" (**i.e.** stars, **1:14-19**; along with the sun and moon)
 - c. the *animal kingdom* upon the earth (**38:39-39:30 cf. Genesis 1:24-25; see next week**)
 - d. the place of *man* on the earth (**40:6-41:34 cf. Genesis 1:25-31; see weeks following**)
 - e. and ... this will be the *order* we take through the speech (**i.e.** chronologically) – grouping together sections of similar nature in the order they "appear" in **Genesis**

3. **read 38:8-11, 16-18:** where were you, O Job, when I established the sea and *set its limits*?
 - a. **observation:** the *massiveness* of the ocean is truly awe-inspiring (from a human perspective)
 1. **e.g.** standing at the edge of the Indian Ocean in E Kenya, and realizing that there is nothing but water for 5,000 mi. to the W shore of Australia (twice the distance across the US)
 2. **e.g.** flying Los Angeles to Sydney is 15 hours (at 500 mph) over nothing but water (7,150 mi)
 3. **i.e.** water covers **71%** of the earth's surface; oceans: **321,000,000 cubic miles** of water
 - b. **meaning:** the sheer *volume* of the seas is so great that we, as tiny *land dwellers*, cannot fathom its *true size* – we cannot *really* capture the *immensity* of the oceans *from our perspective*
 - c. **God: O Job, can you explain how the seas were formed; can you even grasp their power?**
 1. **note:** the imagery God paints in each element is designed to show its *power* = a contrast drawn in each series of questions between the power of *God* and the “power” of *a man*
 2. **IOW:** you, O man, are *unable* to receive the answers you demand from me (the Creator) because *you possess no power* – compared to *me* (the Almighty), you are *nothing*, and any power you *do* possess *is only because I have given it to you* ...
 3. **true:** man was given *dominion* over the seas and all that is in them (**Genesis 1:28**), but this dominion was a *derived* power, limited by the *finitudes* of being a creature, and *frustrated* by the Fall of man into sin
 - a. it's only in *redemption* that such dominion will *truly come* – and such dominion will still be *as creatures*, granted the power God *delegates* to us over creation
 - b. it's only in *redemption* that we will truly be able to grasp the *immensity* of *everything we experience in this created world* (**see below**)
4. **read 38:12-13, 19-21:** where were you, O Job, when I separated light from darkness?
 - a. **observation:** “*morning*” (v. 12) and “*light*” / “*darkness*” (v. 19) may be references to:
 1. the distinction between *morning* and *evening*, as the rotation of the earth produces literal days
 - a. the reference to “*the dawn*” in v. 12 seems to reference a *physical* phenomenon
 2. or, the distinction between *good* and *evil*, as contrasts of *metaphorical* light and darkness
 - a. the reference to “*the wicked*” (vv. 13, 15) being “*shaken out of it*” suggests the idea of light bringing *out into the open* the deeds of the wicked (done under cover of darkness)
 3. either way (**IMO: or both**), the question is:
 - b. **God: O Job, did you “command” light from darkness; can you even grasp the difference between the two, especially when the “times” (in your life!) seem to be both (as at dawn)?**
 1. **again:** notice the *intentional sarcasm* God uses: “*you know, for you were born then ...*” (v. 21)
 2. **IOW:** you demand answers *related to the issues of good and evil*, yet you were not around when *I*, the Creator, established such things in this world – you provided *no input* to them
 3. **e.g.** do you have any idea *why* I, a holy and good God, *intentionally* formed the devil *to be an instrument* of evil; can you *definitively* give an answer to the ancient question of *theodicy*?
5. **read 38:31-33 (in chron. order):** can you, O Job, master the universe and order its objects?
 - a. **observation (again):** it is estimated (**now!**) that there are ~2 *trillion* galaxies in the universe, each containing billions of stars, implying that there are more than 2 *septillion* stars (**2 x 10²⁴**)
 1. **i.e.** 2 septillion has *twice* the number of *zeros* as the current national debt (in the trillions)
 2. **e.g.** deep field images from the James Webb telescope are absolutely *mind-boggling*
 - b. “*Pleiades*” = the seven-sisters star cluster (M45) NW of Taurus; “*Orion*” = the “hunter” constellation of the N celestial hemisphere; “*the Bear*” = Ursa Major, **i.e.** the Big Dipper; “*Mazzaroth*” (*hapax legomenon*: used only here) = Hebrew: general constellations or the Zodiac
 1. **i.e.** various star clusters known from ancient times, used for designating seasons (**Genesis 1:14**), for navigation, and (unfortunately!) for signs and/or omens coming from the “gods”
 - c. but ... God's use of terms like “*bind the chains*” (v. 31), “*lead forth*” (v. 32), “*establish their rule*” (v. 33) implies that he is *not just* referring to their *creation*, but *primarily* to their *movements*
 1. **i.e.** the *forces* that bind the universe (**see above**): gravity, inertia, entropy, centripetal forces
 - d. **God: O Job, can you move the stars around; can you establish how galaxies are formed and stay together; can you keep the sun and moon in their places?**
 1. **IOW:** since your life is so *very limited spatially*, how can you *possibly* understand the forces at work in the universe; how can you understand *your very existence* on this tiny blue speck?
6. **read 38:22-24, 25-27, 34-35:** where were you, O Job, when I designed the ecosystems of the earth?
 - a. **observation:** the items mentioned here are the *essentials* needed for life to exist *on dry land*
 1. **i.e.** when God “separated” the water from the land (**Genesis 1:9-10**), this separation would imply a *completely dry* land, with no water upon it *or above it* (**see v. 26**)
 - a. **except:** the Canopy above the earth that “came down” in the Flood (**Genesis 1:7 cf. 7:11**)

2. **see vv. 26f:** a separation requiring *man* to bring water from the sea to irrigate for crops
 - a. however, with **96%** of the world's water *salinated*, irrigation with sea water is impossible
 - b. thus, God *purposed* to create an ecosystem whereby water *from the sea* (without salt) would come, through clouds and rain (and storms!) to nourish the dry ground to grow crops (**v. 27**)
 - c. producing rivers that would move water to where it was needed (**Genesis 2:10ff**)
 - d. and ... these systems are *very finely tuned* to prevent "too much" water (**e.g. the Flood**)
- b. **God: O Job, can you control the weather; can you bring rain upon the earth when it is needed; can you tune the balance between deluge and drought?**
 1. **IOW:** since your entire *existence* is predicated on the fine balance of nature itself, and you have *zero control* over how it operates, how can you claim to be *knowledgeable enough* to understand things *even more precisely balanced and controlled* (like comfort and pain)?
7. **reality:** both our *existence* and our *circumstances* are the *results* of an endless number of decisions and actions **stretching back all the way to the beginning of time itself**
 - a. **e.g.** if your great-great-great grandfather had never met your great-great-great grandmother (for any of a 1000 reasons), you would not exist (and your parents and grandparents either!)
 - b. **IOW:** our lives are the culmination of **septillions** of choices and actions dating all the way back to the beginning of time – any slight "alteration" along the way **changes everything going forward**
 - c. thus ... to understand the "why" for anything that happens to us along the way would require God to explain **the entire history of time up to the situation for which you demand an answer**
 1. and, **this is unexplainable to our finite minds** – just as *unexplainable* as the boundaries of the sea, the separation of light and darkness, the forces and order of the universe, and the finely tuned ecosystems on this planet that keep us alive
 2. all of which the Sovereign Creator understands and manages **because he is Lord of it all**
 3. as the Alpha (and Omega), God knows all things **because he formed all things** and sustains all things along the path, finely tuning each detail to accomplish his good purposes
 - a. we know little ... because we are at the mercy of forces *beyond our comprehension and control* – thus, to demand answers from God is to *mistake who we really are before him*
 - d. **true:** God has revealed much for us to understand (through natural and special revelation)
 1. but, this does not imply we (in some way) have a right to question the *power* or *morality* (the "why") of the Sovereign God ordaining all that comes to pass (**even when we don't like it!!**)
 - e. **in the end:** we stand *powerless* before an Almighty God – we must *trust him* to govern all things according to his eternal counsels and purposes, **and walk by faith, knowing he is God**
8. the **ordination of Michael Hill** to the office of elder at Grace Fellowship Baptist Church
 - a. **again:** many things have "conspired" to bring this man into our fellowship, each ordained by the Sovereign God to culminate in him joining the elders of this church