

God's Speech – Part 2

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**: there is “no” answer given by God as to *why* Job is suffering
 1. but ... there is an answer, *if* you're willing to listen for it ... **answer: who God is**
 - b. **consideration #2/3**: Calvin points out the following (from **Sermon 147** on **38:1-4**):
 1. **implied**: sometimes the “storms” in life are designed to show us the greatness of God, and to frighten us out of our complacency ...
 - c. **consideration #3/3**: the relationship of natural revelation to special revelation in **Job**
 1. God *himself* comes to speak – to bring **special revelation** to them (**and to us!**)
 2. **IOW**: God now gives us the *reason* for the heavenly council, the righteousness of Job, the “struggle” Job had with his friends, etc. – **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**
 2. **IOW**: since God is the sovereign creator, no one dares to 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**
 2. **IOW**: since God is the ruler of men, no one dares to question his authority *or his intentions*

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

Content

b. God confronts Job to answer (38:2-3)

1. **read 38:2-3**: God demands for Job to answer *his* questions
 - a. this is in *direct response* to Job demanding that *God* answer *his* questions (**e.g. 31:35**; “*let the Almighty answer me*”) – God now “turns the tables” and demands answers *from Job*
 1. **note**: God will do this *again* at the beginning of the Second Half (**40:7**)
 - b. “*who ... darkens counsel*” (**v. 2**) = lit. hides or dims counsel; someone who *thinks* they understand and gives “advice” from a position of weakness
 1. a **play-on-words**: Job seems to question God on the basis of what he *does not know* (because it is hidden from him; **i.e.** the heavenly *counsel*)
 2. so, God will come and speak from a position of *knowledge*, in contrast to Job's ignorance
 - c. “*dress for action like a man*” (**v. 3a**) = lit. “*gird your loins*” (**KJV**); prepare yourself for battle; take up your place and be prepared for what may come
 1. God demands that Job now come and stand before him
 2. **IMO**: this is not a *terrible* rebuke (although it looks like one!)
 - a. more likely, God is simply calling this righteous man (by his own decree!) to stand before him and receive the answers he needs (as a loving Father)
 - d. “*I will question you, and you make it known to me*” (**v. 3b**) = I will ask *you* questions, and you give me answers, even though my questions are *unanswerable to you* (**i.e.** the point!!)
2. **Job 38-41 is God's Word, his special revelation coming to Job, and to us – we are now poised to hear what this book is really about, and how it impacts us going forward**
 - a. **so ... gird your loins, here we go ...**

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

1. **note:** we will not be going “verse-by-verse” through everything in this speech – that would take a very long time (**i.e.** it is *not* my intention to analyze “scientifically” every detail of this account)
 - a. because ... such an analysis would (**ironically!**) **miss the point of the speech** – **i.e.** our inability to truly “know” and *understand* the details is *exactly* the question God is posing to Job ...
 - b. however ... we will “pause” at certain places along the way for a more detailed exam (**see below**)
 1. **i.e.** it took Calvin **ten (10)** sermons to cover this speech (**147-156**) ...
2. **observation:** in many ways, God’s speech “mirrors” the creation account of **Genesis 1**
 - a. the *foundations* of the earth’s formation (**38:4-7 cf. Genesis 1:1-10**)
 - b. the *realities* of the earth’s ecosystems (**38:8-38 cf. Genesis 1:11-23**)
 - c. the *animal kingdom* (**38:39-39:30 cf. Genesis 1:24-25**)
 - d. the nature and place of *man* in relation to the above (**40:6-41:34 cf. Genesis 1:25-31**)
 - e. **interesting:** God *always* starts with his role/work as Creator – the *basis* of all *truth* flows out of the fact that God *created* all things (**i.e.** the basis of *true knowledge* starts with creation)
 1. **e.g.** in the NT, Paul *always* connects his understanding of male/female roles to the creation of Adam and Eve (in that order!; **e.g. 1 Timothy 2:11-14**)
 2. **e.g.** in **Romans 5**, Paul asserts the imputation of righteousness in Christ is the “mirror” of the imputation of guilt that came from a *literal* Adam *in his fall* (**i.e.** can’t have one without the other)
 3. **e.g.** in **John 1:3**, the Apostle contends that the Incarnate Word is the very nature of God by pointing to his role in creating the world (**i.e.** that Jesus is the *Creator*, thus he is to be understood as God entering into *that which he himself created*; **Advent**)
 4. **IOW:** you cannot understand the meaning of redemptive history if you “dismiss” the creation account as a “fable” – God’s creative work *in the beginning* serves as the *foundation* of truth
3. **read 38:4-7:** where were you, O Job, when I, the Creator, laid the foundations of the earth?
 - a. “*tell me, if you have understanding*” (**v. 4**), “*surely you know!*” (**v. 5**) = **sarcasm** by God, designed to make a point: you *claim* to know many things; surely you *must* know this, right?
 1. **IOW:** not to be taken “literally” (woodenly) as though God is *asking Job* for an answer – there *is no answer*, and that is the point
 - b. “*when I laid the foundation of the earth?*” (**v. 4**), “*who determined its measurements?*” (**v. 5**), “*on what were its bases sunk?*” (**v. 6a**), “*who laid its cornerstone?*” (**v. 6b**) = questions re: the creation of the earth itself *designed* to illicit a “shoulder shrug” from Job (**and us!**)
 1. “*foundation*”, “*bases*”, “*cornerstone*” = construction terms, as in something being *built*
 - a. but ... when used within the context of the Creation Narrative, they are references to *everything* needed for the formation of a *physical universe* (**i.e.** *distinct* from the *spiritual*)
 - b. **e.g.** energy (and its *perpetuity*), matter (of all elemental forms, via manipulation of energy), forces (gravity, electromagnetism, strong & weak nuclear), inertia, entropy, the laws of motion, space, and time (as distinct from *timelessness*)
 - c. and ... the *ordering* of all of these to produce a universe capable of supporting life
 2. **i.e.** when I, the Almighty One, set out to form the physical earth (from which you sprang and on which you live), from *whom* did I seek advice or get help (**Romans 11:34**)
 - a. **IOW:** who was my building contractor?
 3. **implication:** no human being can *question* the power or intentions of God, for our very existence is *utterly dependent* upon all of these *existing* and *being maintained by him*
 - a. **i.e.** it is *utter folly* to assume that we can “know” (fully!) how the universe works – God *does* reveal much to us, and allows us to “discover” much – but (in the end), **the formation and continuing support of life in this material world is entirely due to a Sovereign God**
 - b. **meaning:** Job, in your quest for “understanding,” you can’t even fathom the most *fundamental realities of physical existence* – why do you think you can understand *much more complicated matters* (**i.e.** the relationship of suffering to life and righteousness)?
 - c. “*when the morning stars sang together*”, “*all the sons of God shouted for joy?*” (**v. 7**) = the *heavenly audience* God formed *at the beginning* to observe all of his works and give him glory
 1. undoubtedly, a reference to the *angelic host* formed by God
 - a. “*sons of God*” described those summoned by God to his heavenly council (**1:6; 2:1**)
 - b. “*morning stars*” (by inference, using parallelism) are those same beings:
 1. **2 Peter 1:19** likens the Second Coming of Christ to the dawning of the “*morning star*”
 2. and, in **Revelation 22:16**, Jesus refers to *himself* (also!) as the “*bright morning star*,” who sent his “*angel*” to John to reveal the Apocalypse to the churches

3. **IOW:** whereas the *initial* “morning stars” are the angelic host created by God to serve and worship him, the *ultimate* Bright Morning Star (and Son) would be the *Incarnate One*, the Second Person of the Trinity entering into human flesh
4. **e.g.** his appearance was marked by a unique and visible *star* (angelic being, **maybe?**) and *numerous* angelic visits, that led people to him on earth (**Matthew 2**)
5. thus ... in **Hebrews 1:4**, the writer makes it clear that the Son of God Incarnate has, *even as a man*, become “*much superior to angels*” by virtue of his *Sonship*
- c. the two terms *together* point to spiritual beings, who are intimately connected to the purpose and work of God, culminating in the *Incarnation*, when the Son of God enters *humanity*
2. a heavenly audience established *even as the physical universe is being formed*, to observe all that God would do in *creation, redemption, and the glorification of a people* (**i.e.** humans)
 - a. this audience is also referred to by Paul in **Ephesians 3:9-10**:
“[I, Paul, was made a minister] to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”
 - b. “sang together”, “shouted for joy” (**v. 7**) = the *reaction* of these Beings to the *utter power and glory of God*, manifested in the perfection, beauty, and order of all that is created
 1. **note:** while the phrase *appears* metaphorical (**i.e.** stars “singing” by virtue of their beauty; **e.g. Psalm 19:1**), the phrase is *clearly* referring to *someone* observing (**i.e.** a set of beings capable of seeing and *understanding* what is being done; with sentience)
 2. a host of *spiritual beings celebrating* as God creates the *physical universe*, forming within it a *special creature*, one *in his own image* (**i.e.** God’s **crowning achievement**)
 3. **IOW:** a host of beings rejoicing as God forms a *physical world*, and shouting for joy when God forms a creature *utterly unlike them* (below them!)
 - c. **note:** Satan (the fallen angel) was a member of this *original* heavenly audience
 1. **i.e.** as he is *also* invited to the heavenly councils of **chaps. 1-2**
 2. he is referred to in **Isaiah 14:12-14** as the fallen “*Day Star*” who desired to “*ascend to heaven; above the stars of God ... [making himself] like the Most High*”
 - a. originally, one of the heavenly host observing the works of God – but, in **Isaiah 14**, likened to the king of Babylon who saw himself rising above all others (including God!)
 - b. **i.e.** when overcome with *pride in himself*, was cast out of heaven *onto the very creation itself* – to lose his position in the *audience*
 - c. **IMO:** his pride hurt in being “overlooked” in favor of a *human* to receive the glory of God (**i.e.** Adam form *intimately* by God and receiving the *Imago Dei*)
 - d. **i.e.** a *means* through which God would work his *redemptive* purposes (**e.g. even in Job’s life** – a *means* through which God would *reveal to Job his eternal purpose*)
4. **God begins to reveal to Job the point of all that has taken place – and he begins by calling Job to stand before him and hear this immutable truth: I am the Creator, and no one can question my eternal purposes and decrees**
 - a. **Job is not a member of the audience, he is not part of the set crew, and he is not the producer nor the director of this cosmic drama: he is a member of the cast**
 - b. it is through *the created* that God is working out his eternal purposes and plans, and the *elect* angels above are viewing with joy what God is accomplishing through it
 - c. and, even though Satan is doing his best to “alter” the outcome, God’s eternal purposes **cannot be thwarted** by a “former” member of the audience
 - d. thus ... all understanding of human existence **must begin with this truth ...**