

The Lord Blessed the Latter Days of Job More

Job 40:6–42:17

Studies in Job #10

© 2017 Daniel R. Hyde

I RECENTLY saw an interview with a Navy Admiral who gave a graduation speech then parlayed that into a best-selling book on how making your bed is the path to changing the world. His point was that when you wake up and accomplish something right away, it leads to a sense of satisfaction, then more accomplishment in bigger things. We all like to finish tasks, don't we? As a preacher, there is always a sense of accomplishment in preaching through a book. What's more satisfying, though, is hearing how you've not only heard the Word but are doing the Word (Jas. 1:22). Some of you have told me how God's message to you from Job has sustained you recently in your sorrow. Others have said this message has helped you process past pain. Some have said to me that it's helped you comfort others. And what is the message of Job, again? It's not *why* am I suffering but *when* I am suffering whose wisdom will I trust: mine or God's? Get that message deep into your minds and hearts today if you haven't already!

Here at the end we hear that message. But we do so with two surprises. The first surprise we saw already last week: God doesn't answer Job's question. The second—well, I'll save that surprise for now! Let's dive in...

Job's Humiliation (40:6–42:6)

The first surprising thing is that the Lord does not answer Job's personal and perplexing questions of why he is suffering. And we already saw this last Sunday. Notice how the end of the book is like the beginning. In the beginning there were two dialogs between the Lord and Satan. And now there are two dialogs between the Lord and Job. And this second dialog between the Lord and Job follows the same pattern as the first. The Lord answers Job again in a manifestation of his glorious presence **out of the whirlwind** (40:6). Again the Lord challenges Job to **dress for action like a man**, which I mentioned is the imagery of girding up your loins or pulling up your long tunic and tucking it into your waist so you can wrestle. Again the Lord tells Job to do this not because he's literally going to wrestle him, but because he's going to fight him verbally and spiritually with a series of questions that the Lord sarcastically says Job obviously can answer (40:7). Then again the Lord asks Job a rhetorical question based on Job's previous speeches. In chapter 38 it was a question about Job's pretended omniscience;

here it's about justice: **will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?** (40:8) Then he moves into the realm of rhetorically asking about Job's power: **have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?** (40:9)

Why is the Lord doing this? Don't we as parents sometimes tell our over-confident kids that if they're so smart, they can figure out how to fix the bike? Or that if they're so strong they can carry the cooler, the chairs, the towels, and the toys down to the beach—*alone*? The Lord is humbling Job here. So he tells Job that since he speaks as if he's God then he should act like God, clothe himself with glory (40:10), and humble all those who are high and mighty in pride (40:11–13). Is that so hard to do, your Highness? And after this, the Lord says **will I also acknowledge to you that your own right hand can save you** (40:14).

Of course this is all impossible. How can Job stand before an almighty God? So the Lord stoops down to set up a comparison between Job and the beasts. Surely Job should be stronger and wiser than creatures! The first beast is called **Behemoth**, which sounds like a water buffalo (40:15–24), and the second beast is called **Leviathan**, which sounds like a crocodile (41:1–34). But **Behemoth** is so strong and mighty (40:16–18) that **if the river is**

turbulent he is not frightened (40:23) and no one **can...take him by his eyes, or pierce his nose with a snare** (40:24). And **Leviathan** is so strong that he cannot be fished out of the water, tied up, and made a servant or pet to play with (41:1-5). The Lord tells Job, “**Lay your hands on him; remember the battle—you will not do it again!**” (41:8) But Job can’t! That’s why the Lord says of man **he is laid low even at the sight of him** (41:9) Then comes the punch line: **Who then is he who can stand before me? Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine** (41:10-11).

Two summers ago Karajan and I were able to travel to Costa Rica and one of the things we did was do a jet ski tour of the coast. Then our leader saw something, motioned to the group to follow him, and sped us away. Soon we were near several Humpback whales. First came the excitement, then came the awe, then came the realization that if this massive beast decided to go under and come up where I was or do its familiar breach out of the water, I could be a gonner at any moment. That’s what the Lord is doing with Job. Here we are *homo sapiens*—wise man—and there is soulless beast; but we’re nothing!

And this leads to Job's humble answer: **I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted** (42:2). Job cannot corral Behemoth or Leviathan so how much more almighty is the Lord? And it's the Lord's ability that can take from him as well as give back to him. Then Job quotes the Lord's own words from the Lord's previous speech: **"Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?"** Then Job applies this Word to himself: **Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know** (42:3) "I am not all-knowing," says Job. Then he quotes the Lord again: **"Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me"** (42:4). Then he applies this Word to himself again: **I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes** (42:5-6). The Lord's almighty purpose and providence over Satan and Job led to Job's outward sorrow of sitting on a heap of ashes and dust. But now he's genuinely repentant for his own sin. This is the difference between formal and genuine repentance. In formal repentance you're sorry for the consequences of what has happened to you; in genuine repentance you're sorry for the sin itself.

The Lord has humbled his son, Job. And we need to recognize that sometimes our Heavenly Father in his own holy and good purpose needs to bring us down to the dust before we can experience his delight.

Job's Exaltation (42:10–17)

And it's that delight we go on to see at the very end of the story with *Job's exaltation*. In 42:10 we're taken back to the opening scene of the book with these words: **And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job...the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before**. He experiences the exaltation of his wealth. Look at verse 12: **And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys**. In the beginning he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys (1:3), but now he had double.

He experiences the exaltation of his children. Again he had **seven sons and three daughters** (42:13) and **in all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters** (42:15).

He experiences the exaltation of dignity and honor as we read in verse 11: **Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And**

they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him. And each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold.

He experiences the exaltation of long life: **And after this Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations (42:16).**

I mentioned at the beginning that there were two big surprises in how the story ends. The first is that the Lord never answers Job. He just says, “I am God and you are not.” And Job accepts that. But there’s a second surprise. I want you to remember what Job’s friends kept saying again and again: “God is just, what is happening to you is the consequence of justice upon sin, therefore if you repent God will restore everything back to you.” The surprise is not so much that the Lord restores Job, but the reason. It’s not because of Job’s righteousness—after all he’s just confessed his sins—and it’s not because of his repentance according to his friends’ advice. No, the reason for Job’s exaltation and twofold restoration is the same for why Job is suffering: “I am God.” To be more precise, this is evidence of God’s abundant, lavish, free and undeserved grace towards a sinner like Job! You see, brothers and sisters, the story of Job is teaching us to humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand and to patiently wait for him to exalt us at his proper time (1

Peter 5:6). God is sovereign over Job's lowest points in life and he is sovereign over his highest points as well. How about for you? Is God God when you are low? Is God God when you are up?

Your Creator commands you today to humble yourself. Confess that you've sinned against him. Confess that he's God and you are not. Embrace his gift of grace who is Jesus Christ, who left the glory of heaven, was humbled in life and death, and was exalted in resurrection and ascension so that a sinner like you can have hope in this life and in the next. Amen.