

Survey of the Bible part 84 **Job 38:1-4**

Job 38:1-3 ^{NAU} Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, ² "Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? ³ "Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

When we first look at this passage, especially in light of Job's torment and anguish, we might ask ourselves the question, where is the kinder and gentler God who is all compassionate?

After all it is God Himself who has placed Job in this situation; it is God Himself who has not come to Job's rescue; it is God Himself who has remained silent all this time. And now, as God begins His discourse with Job and his friends, He answers Job out of the whirlwind.

As we saw last time the whirlwind might be construed as meaning the whirlwind in Job's life, but the more natural rendering of the passage is a whirlwind or tempest that was experienced by Job and his friends where God manifests Himself to them, not unlike what we saw last time with the Lord descending on Mount Sinai.

Exodus 19:18-19 ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai *was* all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. ¹⁹ When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

Why do you suppose God would manifest Himself to Job in this way as opposed to approaching them like He did with Adam and Eve as He walked up to them in the cool of the day?

The entire book of Job is about God's ability to keep His people and to manifest His power and will in the affairs of all men, especially His called out people.

And as we've seen, the entire book of Job, up to this point, has been a discourse between Job and his friends, as they have debated why Job was suffering the way he was.

And the one thing that both Job and his friends were operating on was the information they had before them, which was Job claiming to be a righteous man despite the fact that Job seemed to be suffering the wrath of God.

It was hard for all parties involved to make any sense of this because they surmised that a righteous man cannot suffer at the hand of God in this way, unless that righteous man had done something worthy of such punishment.

And so, Job was seeking for answers and his friends were seeking for answers. Job could only seek answers from God because his friends had already made up their minds as to what the problem was. And so up to this point the counsel that Job sought was continually being short circuited by his friends whose counsel was to repent of his sin.

And so, God finally answers from the whirlwind, which is to say that He approached them all in power and authority. And again, whenever we see this expression throughout the Scriptures it is indicative of God's righteous judgment.

Psalm 58:9-11 ⁹ *Before your pots can feel the fire of thorns He will sweep them away with a whirlwind*, the green and the burning alike. ¹⁰ The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. ¹¹ And men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely there is a God who judges on earth!"

Isaiah 29:6 ⁶ From the LORD of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, *With whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.*

And so, when God approaches Job and his friends this does not appear to be a tranquil encounter, but rather a serious encounter which defines as to who is in control.

And so, the answer from the whirlwind will begin with a question to Job.

Job 38:2 ² "Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge?"

God is essentially saying, who is trying to approach Me in their own wisdom and make their case when you approach in complete ignorance?

How is God setting the stage here?

He is the One who is all wise and knowing and powerful. And often times His people need to take a step back and not try to counsel God as to how He should do things or question God on the way He does things.

This doesn't mean we can't ask questions of God and come to Him in prayer seeking His will, but it does mean that after seeking Him and not getting the answer we are looking for that we should then try and proceed without Him.

Now this can be a fine line because there are points in life where decisions need to be made sooner than later. And we may have sought the Lord on the matter and didn't seem to come away with any answers. But a decision still needs to be made.

In those cases where is our first line of counsel?

The word of God. If we make any decision will it result in violating God's word?

Where might be our second line of counsel?

Other believers who rely on the word of God in their counsel.

In Job's case he will hear directly from God.

Job 38:3 ³ "Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

What kind of a statement is, gird up your loins like a man?

Get ready for the kind of counsel that you may not want to hear, but be ready to accept it like a man and not faint when you get the answer.

And this is in the context of the previous verse which declares that Job has approached God without knowledge, which is to say, because you don't have all the facts, you need to be willing to keep your mouth shut and just listen.

This is a hard lesson for any of us to learn, especially from our God but all of this is in the context of the very beginning of this account where God declared to Satan that Job was a righteous man and upright in all his ways.

And so, this may sound harsh at this particular point, but it is all bathed in love and mercy and concern for His righteous servant.

And this is essential to understand because there are times in all of our lives when we find ourselves in the whirlwind and sometimes God is in the middle of that whirlwind and we don't see Him because we're more concerned with the whirlwind itself.

But here's the truth.

Proverbs 10:25 ²⁵ When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, But the righteous *has* an everlasting foundation.

Both the wicked and the righteous may experience God's whirlwind. For the wicked it is meant for destruction in its final form. For the righteous, those who have embraced Christ by faith, it is never meant for destruction, because in Him we have an everlasting foundation.

Romans 8:1 ^{NAU} Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And so, God continues.

Job 38:3 I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

In most languages this is a form of speech we might call sarcasm.

Again, why might God employ this type of approach?

To get Job's attention and put his thinking process into the proper perspective. And the proper perspective here is that God is saying, 'no one can instruct Me, so listen to what I say.'

But God is not going to let Job off the hook that easily. The form of speech we call sarcasm is about to take on a new level for Job as God puts all things into perspective for him.

Job 38:4 ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding,

Now let's keep the context in mind here. God has approached Job in the whirlwind, which is to say, God has literally made Himself manifest to Job to where they are in each other's midst. Job and his friends can see and hear God in the whirlwind.

So, let's go back to a basic question about the God who reveals Himself.

We are told that no one in this world could ever see God and live because of His awesome glory. And yet, we are told that God has personally revealed Himself to men on different occasions.

How do we explain this?

God has chosen to hide His glory in such a way where He allows men to see and hear Him. And in these manifestations, be they burning bushes, appearances as an angel of the Lord, appearances as a man in the case of approaching Abraham, or in the fiery

furnace with Shadrach, Meshac and Abednego, we know that God communicates His very presence in all of these instances.

But they are not His glorious presence which we are told that He had to hide from Moses on one occasion.

Exodus 33:21-23 ²¹ Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand *there* on the rock; ²² and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. ²³ "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

And so, we see that there are many instances in the word of God where the Lord manifests Himself to people. The question is who in the Godhead is designated the One who reveals the God of heaven and earth?

Matthew 11:27 ²⁷ "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.

John 1:14-18 ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" ¹⁶ For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

John 14:9 ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

This is part of the reason that Jesus is designated the Word in the beginning of John's gospel.

John 1:1-3 ^{NAU} In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

The Word or Logos is He who explains and it is Jesus who has always explained or revealed the Father throughout human history.

And so, when God approaches Job in the whirlwind who is Job being confronted by?

The Son of God, Jesus Christ.

By the way, it is no coincidence that the Lord, (and the word Lord here in our text is Jehovah), takes Job back to the very beginning of creation.

Job 38:4 ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding,

John 1:1-3 ^{NAU} In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

The Lord Jesus Christ is painting a picture for Job that only God could paint because there is only one person who was there at creation who had the ability to call all things into existence and that is God alone.

By the way, what are the foundations of the earth?

Genesis 1:1-2 ^{NAU} In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

We are told that the earth was formless and void. In other words, in its original form the earth was "formless." This doesn't mean it didn't have any form, only that when God chose to call matter into existence for the reason of creating earth it was not in its final form.

What this means is that God chose to use a process of forming the earth into its final form instead of simply and instantly creating earth the way it ended up on day 3 .

Genesis 1:9-13 ⁹ Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, *and* fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after ³their kind with

seed in them"; and it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. ¹³ There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

So, when the question was asked of Job, where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?, this is a reference back to Genesis 1:1-2.

But again, if we are to answer the question as to what the foundations of the earth were we would have to say that when God spoke matter into existence He hung it in a particular place to then work on it over the span of 3 days before He would call it earth as it was meant to look in its final form. Job himself had a very good understanding of how God created the earth.

Job 26:7 ⁷ "He stretches out the north over empty space And hangs the earth on nothing.

Now when Job says that God hangs the earth on nothing he is not defining "nothing" in any scientific way. He is simply stating the obvious. From man's perspective it is as though the earth were just hanging in the expanse of nothing, just as the moon and the stars appear to hanging on nothing.

Recent scientific discoveries have determined that space is not nothing. Einstein's theory of relativity in the early 20th century made clear that there is a direct correlation between time and matter and that space is dimensional, which is to say that it has substance. And scientists have discovered that space seems to be able to be stretched or expanded. They have actually caught up with the bible.

^{NAU} **Isaiah 40:22** It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

God took the substance of space and literally stretched it out in the first few days of creation and in that process He took the beginnings of the earth and placed it in the midst of this space to hang it on what appears to be nothing, but is actually something.

By the way, when it says in Genesis, in the beginning God created, what is implied by the word beginning as it relates to God?

That the beginning had a beginning before which time there was only God.

In the beginning also implies that God created time for the specific purpose to work alongside matter. Space, matter and time are creations of God and did not exist prior to God creating them, thus, "in the beginning."

But back to our original question, what are the foundations of the earth?, we would have to say that the foundations were actually made up of water as the Spirit hovered over the face of the deep waters.

Peter would also confirm this.

2 Peter 3:3-6 ³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

And so, the beginnings or foundation of our present earth were formed out of water. This must include the truth that suspended in this water, this slurry mixture that God hung on space, all of the physical elements that would go into making solids that would be part of the final product that God and we call earth.

Job knew that in the beginning only God was there and only God could have created the earth. And so, the question is both rhetorical and in a sense sarcastic because God knew that Job knew. Everything about our existence must start with God as Creator.

And this is why all throughout Scripture when the word of God addresses the one true God it often reverts back to Him creating all things as John points out in his gospel and Paul does when sharing the gospel with the Greeks.

Acts 17:23-25 ²³ "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ "***The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth,*** does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is

He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things;

Our God is Creator and Lord and Master and Savior. He is our all in all and this is the point He is making to Job as He begins His questioning of Job.

By the way, as a side note, we are told that the foundations of the earth, the earth itself was never intended to be a throw away. The original earth that God created was always meant to be an eternal place for mankind.

^{NAU} **Psalm 104:5** He established the earth upon its foundations, So that it will not totter forever and ever.

The earth may destroyed by water and fire, but it will never be annihilated because God is going to recreate it for the purpose of His people dwelling with Him on the new earth at the last day as He purges the earth by fire and the curse is removed as we are taken back to the paradise God designed for us that we may live with Him for**EVER**.