

Job 38:1-11 ^{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! ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding, ⁵ Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? ⁶ "On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy? ⁸ "Or *who* enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; ⁹ When I made a cloud its garment And thick darkness its swaddling band, ¹⁰ And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors, ¹¹ And I said, "Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop "?

We've spent a good amount of time with Job and his friends dealing with the problem of Job's trials. And now finally God answers Job from the whirlwind and as we saw last week the answer that Job is about to get is rhetorical in nature as God asks a number of leading questions as we just read.

In fact, almost the entire 38th chapter is God asking Job questions about the nature of His physical creation, primarily the creation of the earth.

And so, we have God declaring that He created the foundation of the earth, which we saw last time was a watery slurry that He hung in space and started rotating on day one as there was morning and evening, the first day.

And then the Lord describes how He sunk the bases of the earth to create seas, and lakes and determined how far those waters would encroach upon the dry land.

Job 38:10-11 ¹⁰ And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors, ¹¹ And I said, "Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop "?

Going back to the foundation of the earth and the importance of that foundation God then asks Job of his understanding of how that water works in the real world of Job.

Job 38:28-30 ²⁸ "Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? ²⁹ "From whose womb has come the ice? And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth? ³⁰ "Water becomes hard like stone, And the surface of the deep is imprisoned.

Unless Job has an advanced degree in hydrology he probably couldn't answer some of those questions.

But there is a point to all of these questions regarding the complexity of the creation of the earth and it should not be lost on us as it was probably not lost on Job.

What might be some of the reasons for God asking these questions about Job's involvement in the creation of the universe?

Aside from the obvious that Job was not there in the beginning and had no part in any of this it does direct us to the One who was.

But more than that it shows us that this entire universe is no accident. It was the intention of our Creator to plan, execute and then fulfill His will according to those plans without any intervention or consultation from anyone but Himself for His own glory.

So, what does any of that have to do with Job's problems?

Like creation, which was planned before time began, the creation of Job was planned before time began. In fact, Job's salvation, was planned before time began, as was ours.

Ephesians 1:3-6 ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as ***He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world***, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ ***He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself***, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Note the phrase that Paul uses to describe this planning. "Before the foundation of the world." This is the same phrase that God confronts Job with when He says, where were you when I laid the foundation of the world?

This is God's way of saying that prior to the laying of the foundation of the world there was no time, there was no physical matter, there was no vast space and universe. There was nothing as

we know it today. There was only God and His rule and a plan that He would employ that would include a physical creation and you and me to share in.

And so, the point that God is making to Job in stating the obvious as to who created all things, is that just as the physical universe is created by Me according to My will, so is man who is created in My likeness to accomplish My will in this vast plan for man of which Job is a part and partner as God has determined prior to time and creation.

What this does, especially for the believer, is to put all things into perspective. And that perspective must first and foremost put God at the center.

So, using God's answer to Job as an example, what might be God's answer to us when we find ourselves in hard spots in life?

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

But a harder question is this. Where do we find comfort in that, unless we think that God's answer to Job was not to be a comfort, but just a rebuke?

The comfort comes from the fact that God not only saw this coming from before the foundations of the earth, but He planned it just that way for an individual named Job, before the foundations of the world. And He planned it that way for Job's good and God's glory.

And it's the latter part of that statement that is the most important aspect of what God does in our lives, whether we understand it or not. To consider that our lives have been personally planned out by the Creator before the foundation of the world to accomplish a particular plan that God has given to us, and only us in a particular way, is to begin to understand that life has a much greater role than just finding pleasure for ourselves.

There is nothing wrong with seeking pleasure. We are actually hard wired by God to look for pleasure in this world. That was the original design and command of God to man.

Genesis 2:7-9 ⁷ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. ⁸ The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He

had formed. ⁹ ***Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food***; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-18 ¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. ¹⁶ The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "***From any tree of the garden you may eat freely***"; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "***It is not good for the man to be alone***; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

Up to this point in creation everything that God had accomplished was deemed good. But when it came to making the perfect plan of God come to fruition it was not deemed good in the case of man because there was no suitable helper for him.

In other words, neither God, or man, would be pleased until woman was created for him. And it did not please God until that was accomplished.

God's original design for man was to be ruler, if you will, over God's creation as God gave them the desire and the ability to carry out this plan in a perfect world. It was meant to be a pleasurable experience. And we know this as this is juxtaposed with what we see happening after the fall.

Genesis 3:16-19 ¹⁶ To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

What part of this curse sounds like a pleasant experience?

What does this assume about man's existence prior to the fall as it relates to man's pleasure?

Was man's desire for pleasure in this world extinguished simply because the curse and sin were introduced into this world?

This is why the world continues to seek pleasure. The problem is that for all the pleasure that man desires naturally, he desires it in a world that is no longer naturally able to deliver the kind of pleasure that man had originally.

And what was man's original desire for pleasure prior to sin?

To please his Creator in a world that was perfect.

Since the fall, man's desires for pleasure are found in anything and everything but God, precisely because of sin and the curse. When man died spiritually in the garden so did his desire for God. And if God is not your desire, the only other thing you can turn your attention to is the world around you. It becomes your all in all.

2 Timothy 3:2-5 ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

And if God had not sought out Adam and Eve after the fall they would still be hiding from Him not desiring to be in His presence because of their guilt. And their only pleasure would be the things of the world.

Only in God seeking them out and giving them a new heart were they able to respond to the love and mercy that He gave them.

But here's the point to all of this as it relates to Job and us. Since the original fall did not take God by surprise, but was part of His forever plan to His glory, Job's trials did not take God by surprise, but was actually part of His plan, as we saw in the beginning of the book of Job.

What does this tell us about our own trials, especially as believers in Christ?

It means that God has all things in control and that nothing takes Him by surprise but is actually part of an eternal plan that God had personally put in place for each of us here. Job thought that maybe God had abandoned him when he needed Him the most.

God's answer is where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth, which is to say, where were you before time began when I personally chose you to exist and then brought you into existence in time to use your life to bring Me glory?

Where were you in that process? And if you were not involved in that process why do you question My goodness if your pleasure is not satisfied in the way you desire?

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

But our desires are still to experience pleasure in this world isn't it? The difference for a believer is to seek pleasure in our God first and foremost and in that pleasure of Him and His free gift to us in Christ Jesus do we find a peace that passes understanding.

And the reason that it passes understanding is that it doesn't make any sense in the natural world. It didn't make any sense to Job and his friends. But Job had, for a season, exchanged his peace with God for a pleasure that had been taken away.

And when God confronted Job with this reality of God being in control of all things for a reason, with respect to an eternal plan, He reminded Job that what happens in this world, especially when the pleasures of this world and the joys of what we think life should be are not there, there is a bigger issue at hand and it is God's pleasure.

Philippians 2:12-14 ¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, ***both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*** ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

Oh, that's comforting. His pleasure is to make me miserable at different times in my life like Job?

No. It is never God's intention to make any of us miserable for the sake of making us miserable any more than it was the Father's intention to make His Son miserable by sending Him to the cross. It always has a reason.

Colossians 1:19-20 ¹⁹ For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His

cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

How is it possible for the Father to take pleasure in crushing His Son?

Because it was through that very act that He has reconciled all things to the Father.

And by the way, what does it mean that He reconciled all things to Himself, instead of saying He reconciled all of His people to Himself?

^{NAU} **2 Corinthians 5:18** Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

Romans 8:20-23 ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

So, the redemptive plan of God is not limited to people, but also to His entire creation of which God will also redeem and give back to His resurrected people on the last day as an inheritance to be shared in and with the Son who purchased all of this for us.

But until that time God is using our lives to advance His kingdom and advance His glory even during the trials of life. But when we know this and understand this and accept this we will be able to cope with the trials of life in a way where we do not lose heart. The world at large does not understand this but we are supposed to understand this.

1 Corinthians 2:4-8 ⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that *your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.* ⁶ Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; *a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age*, who are passing away; ⁷ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ⁸ *the wisdom* which

none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes to the truth of God's mystery and because of this personal touch of God we have and understand the truth of what this world is really all about. And when we understand this our faith will rest on this truth, and not on the wisdom of this world or of men.

God was explaining to Job and to us that though the trials of life may crush us at times, those very trials are never without God's attention and will as He uses those things for our good and His glory.

Romans 8:28-32 ²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

This is why even those things in creation we often take for granted are not without God's special attention.

Matthew 10:28-32 ²⁸ "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And *yet* not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. ³² "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

God has not forgotten us in our trials, but uses those things to build what He desires in us to His glory. And though we may never reach the kind of pleasure and joy we desire in this world, He promises to give us the prize of perfect peace and happiness filled with pleasures beyond our imaginations in the future.

We get a glimpse into the heart of Jesus as it relates to you and me who are in Him by faith. And we see this toward the end of the life of Christ on this earth as He is praying to the Father on our behalf.

John 17:7-26 ⁷ "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; ⁸ for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. ⁹ "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; ¹⁰ and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ "I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as *We are*. ¹² "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³ "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as *We are* one; ²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. ²⁴ "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; ²⁶ and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Next week we'll see Job's reply to God as we finish up the book of Job.