

JOB

CHAPTERS 38:1- 42:6

Introduction

People who say that they have some questions they'd like to ask God when they see Him ought to carefully read these closing chapters of the book of Job.

Job had asked many questions about his sufferings. Instead of answering any of them, God asks Job some seventy-seven questions of His own - - *none of which he can answer!* Those who think they have questions for God would certainly fare no better than Job.

God's questions leave Job *silenced*, then *subdued*:

▶▶ The first set of questions runs from the first verse of chapter thirty-eight through verse two of chapter forty. In 40:4 Job says,

Job 40:4 "Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth."

Job is silenced by God's questions.

▶▶ The second set of questions runs from verse six of chapter forty through verse thirty-four of chapter forty-one. In 42:3 Job says,

Job 42:3 ... Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

You can be silenced by superior force, but still be rebellious in your spirit. Job's words indicate he was both silenced and subdued.

His suffering had not been relieved, but Job was *silenced* and *subdued* - - **submitted** to the will of God for his life, whether it be to continue suffering or to be delivered from suffering.

As you go through life it is inevitable that you will have many questions about the suffering you experience. Your questions may

not all be answered; God is under no obligation to answer them. If you follow the example of Job, it is better that your questions about suffering be silenced and subdued so that you can submit yourself to the will of God.

How are your questions about suffering silenced and subdued? We'll see two things in our study of these chapters:

#1 Your Questions About Suffering
Are Silenced When You See
The God Of Nature

#2 Your Questions About Suffering
Are Subdued When You See
The Nature Of God

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#1 Your Questions About Suffering
Are Silenced When You See
The God Of Nature
(38:1-40:5)

God gives Job no explanation; only an exhibition of His wisdom in nature. When you see the wisdom of God in His oversight of nature, your questions about His oversight of your own life are put in their proper perspective. After all, God cares more about you than anything else in His created universe! You need never question His care for you - - even in your suffering.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:
Job 38:2 "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge?
Job 38:3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

God is addressing Job in these opening words. In chapter forty-two, Job identifies himself as the one who darkens "counsel by words without knowledge."

God begins with a series of questions concerning inanimate nature:

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

Job 38:5 Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?

Job 38:6 To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone,

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

God pictures Himself a builder who surveys the site, marks off the dimensions, pours the footings, lays the cornerstone, and erects the structure. We know today that the universe is a marvel of design - - demanding an intelligent Designer. Was Job there when God created the universe? No, he wasn't. But he knows that the universe was carefully designed. So, too, are the circumstances of his life - - including his suffering. Thus he ought to be silent, not questioning God about his suffering.

Job 38:8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors, When it burst forth and issued from the womb;

Job 38:9 When I made the clouds its garment, And thick darkness its swaddling band;

Job 38:10 When I fixed My limit for it, And set bars and doors;

Job 38:11 When I said, 'This far you may come, but no farther, And here your proud waves must stop!'

Who made the oceans and set their cycles and limits? God. How much more can He set the cycles and limits of your circumstances - - including your suffering.

Job 38:12 "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, And caused the dawn to know its place,

Job 38:13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it?

Job 38:14 It takes on form like clay under a seal, And stands out like a garment.

Job 38:15 From the wicked their light is withheld, And the upraised arm is broken.

As the light of the sun spreads across the world, it reveals the details of the landscape like the impression of a seal on clay or the unfolding of a garment taken out of a dark closet. Light and dark have always been used by man as symbols for good and evil. The thought here is that God is light - - good, not evil. Thus you need not question Him regarding your suffering; all that He does is good.

The next eleven questions relate to the vast dimensions of creation:

Job 38:16 "Have you entered the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in search of the depths?

Job 38:17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Job 38:18 Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this.

Job 38:19 "Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place,

Job 38:20 That you may take it to its territory, That you may know the paths to its home?

Job 38:21 Do you know it, because you were born then, Or because the number of your days is great?

Job 38:22 "Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail,

Job 38:23 Which I have reserved for the time of trouble, For the day of battle and war?

Job 38:24 By what way is light diffused, Or the east wind scattered over the earth?

If God can measure such phenomena, and use them for His purposes, He can certainly measure your suffering and use it for a purpose in your life.

Job 38:25 "Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water, Or a path for the thunderbolt,

Job 38:26 To cause it to rain on a land where there is no one, A wilderness in which there is no man;

Job 38:27 To satisfy the desolate waste, And cause to spring forth the growth of tender grass?

Job 38:28 Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew?

Job 38:29 From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth?

Job 38:30 The waters harden like stone, And the surface of the deep is frozen.

God oversees habitats where no one lives. If He is careful to care for the wilderness, He can be counted on to care for you.

The stars in their constellations are mentioned next:

Job 38:31 "Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, Or loose the belt of Orion?

Job 38:32 Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs?

Job 38:33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth?

It is beyond the scope of our study, but I want to point out that the constellations tell the Gospel in the stars! *Mazzaroth* is a reference to the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Beginning with Virgo, telling of the virgin birth of the Savior, all the way through Leo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah - - Jesus - - mankind has a witness of the Gospel. Astrology is a corruption of God's intention for the stars.

Job 38:34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, That an abundance of water may cover you?

Job 38:35 Can you send out lightnings, that they may go, And say to you, 'Here we are!'

Job 38:36 Who has put wisdom in the mind? Or who has given understanding to the heart?
Job 38:37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven,
Job 38:38 When the dust hardens in clumps, And the clods cling together?

Job could not control the weather; but God can and does. He can and does control the circumstances of your life with equal precision.

Beginning in verse thirty-nine, God begins a series of questions involving animals - - six beasts and five birds:

Job 38:39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
Job 38:40 When they crouch in their dens, Or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait?
Job 38:41 Who provides food for the raven, When its young ones cry to God, And wander about for lack of food?
Job 39:1 "Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats bear young? Or can you mark when the deer gives birth?
Job 39:2 Can you number the months that they fulfill? Or do you know the time when they bear young?
Job 39:3 They bow down, They bring forth their young, They deliver their offspring.
Job 39:4 Their young ones are healthy, They grow strong with grain; They depart and do not return to them.
Job 39:5 "Who set the wild donkey free? Who loosed the bonds of the onager [wild donkey],
Job 39:6 Whose home I have made the wilderness, And the barren land his dwelling?
Job 39:7 He scorns the tumult of the city; He does not heed the shouts of the driver.
Job 39:8 The range of the mountains is his pasture, And he searches after every green thing.
Job 39:9 "Will the wild ox be willing to serve you? Will he bed by your manger?
Job 39:10 Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes? Or will he plow the valleys behind you?
Job 39:11 Will you trust him because his strength is great? Or will you leave your labor to him?
Job 39:12 Will you trust him to bring home your grain, And gather it to your threshing floor?
Job 39:13 "The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, But are her wings and pinions like the kindly stork's?
Job 39:14 For she leaves her eggs on the ground, And warms them in the dust;
Job 39:15 She forgets that a foot may crush them, Or that a wild beast may break them.
Job 39:16 She treats her young harshly, as though they were not hers; Her labor is in vain, without concern,
Job 39:17 Because God deprived her of wisdom, And did not endow her with understanding.
Job 39:18 When she lifts herself on high, She scorns the horse and its rider.
Job 39:19 "Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder?
Job 39:20 Can you frighten him like a locust? His majestic snorting strikes terror.
Job 39:21 He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He gallops into the clash of arms.
Job 39:22 He mocks at fear, and is not frightened; Nor does he turn back from the sword.
Job 39:23 The quiver rattles against him, The glittering spear and javelin.

Job 39:24 He devours the distance with fierceness and rage; Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet has sounded.

Job 39:25 At the blast of the trumpet he says, 'Aha!' He smells the battle from afar, The thunder of captains and shouting.

Job 39:26 "Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, And spread its wings toward the south?

Job 39:27 Does the eagle mount up at your command, And make its nest on high?

Job 39:28 On the rocks it dwells and resides, On the crag of the rock and the stronghold.

Job 39:29 From there it spies out the prey; Its eyes observe from afar.

Job 39:30 Its young ones suck up blood; And where the slain are, there it is."

God's providential care for these beasts ought to inspire you to trust in His providential care for your life. God cares for you more than these.

Job is silenced by this first series of questions:

Job 40:1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:

Job 40:2 "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it."

Job 40:3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

Job 40:4 "Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth.

Job 40:5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

Our first reaction to suffering is to question God, which leads to arguing with Him and contending against Him. As long as you defend yourself and argue, God can't work for you and in you to accomplish His purposes. You must be silenced. You will be silenced if you see the God of nature the way Job did.

You can be silenced but still not be subdued...

#2 Your Questions About Suffering Are Subdued When You See The Nature Of God (40:6 – 42:6)

The next series of questions, although still involving creation, have a moral component. Look at verses six through fourteen of chapter forty:

Job 40:6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

Job 40:7 "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me:

Job 40:8 "Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?

Job 40:9 Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?

Job 40:10 Then adorn yourself with majesty and splendor, and array yourself with glory and beauty.

Job 40:11 Disperse the rage of your wrath; Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him.

Job 40:12 Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; Tread down the wicked in their place.

Job 40:13 Hide them in the dust together, Bind their faces in hidden darkness.

Job 40:14 Then I will also confess to you That your own right hand can save you.

The emphasis in these questions is on the moral nature of God. You see the words “justify” and “judge.” Those are the two categories all men, women, and children will fall into. Some will be *justified* as they receive God’s salvation by grace through faith; some will be *judged* for rejecting God’s salvation by grace through faith. In other words, it is the nature of God to work out His purposes in the lives of every man, woman, and child on earth. What He brings into your life is purposeful - - even if it involves suffering.

God questions Job regarding two beasts - - the *behemoth* and the *leviathan*.

▶▶ The behemoth:

Job 40:15 "Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; He eats grass like an ox.

Job 40:16 See now, his strength is in his hips, And his power is in his stomach muscles.

Job 40:17 He moves his tail like a cedar; The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.

Job 40:18 His bones are like beams of bronze, His ribs like bars of iron.

Job 40:19 He is the first of the ways of God; Only He who made him can bring near His sword.

Job 40:20 Surely the mountains yield food for him, And all the beasts of the field play there.

Job 40:21 He lies under the lotus trees, In a covert of reeds and marsh.

Job 40:22 The lotus trees cover him with their shade; The willows by the brook surround him.

Job 40:23 Indeed the river may rage, Yet he is not disturbed; He is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth,

Job 40:24 Though he takes it in his eyes, Or one pierces his nose with a snare.

Commentators claim that the behemoth is a hippopotamus, a water buffalo, or an elephant. **Not!** Have you seen the tails of these beasts? Their tails are certainly not “like a cedar.” Behemoth is a land dwelling dinosaur. The popular myth that dinosaurs became extinct 70 million years before man “evolved” are wrong - - both biblically and scientifically.

▶▶ The leviathan:

Job 41:1 "Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?

Job 41:2 Can you put a reed through his nose, Or pierce his jaw with a hook?

Job 41:3 Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you?

Job 41:4 Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever?

Job 41:5 Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you leash him for your maidens?

Job 41:6 Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants?

Job 41:7 Can you fill his skin with harpoons, Or his head with fishing spears?

Job 41:8 Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle; Never do it again!

Job 41:9 Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false; Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him?

Job 41:10 No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me?

Job 41:11 Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.

Job 41:12 "I will not conceal his limbs, His mighty power, or his graceful proportions.

Job 41:13 Who can remove his outer coat? Who can approach him with a double bridle?

Job 41:14 Who can open the doors of his face, With his terrible teeth all around?

Job 41:15 His rows of scales are his pride, Shut up tightly as with a seal;

Job 41:16 One is so near another That no air can come between them;

Job 41:17 They are joined one to another, They stick together and cannot be parted.

Job 41:18 His sneezings flash forth light, And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

Job 41:19 Out of his mouth go burning lights; Sparks of fire shoot out.

Job 41:20 Smoke goes out of his nostrils, As from a boiling pot and burning rushes.

Job 41:21 His breath kindles coals, And a flame goes out of his mouth.

Job 41:22 Strength dwells in his neck, And sorrow dances before him.

Job 41:23 The folds of his flesh are joined together; They are firm on him and cannot be moved.

Job 41:24 His heart is as hard as stone, Even as hard as the lower millstone.

Job 41:25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid; Because of his crashings they are beside themselves.

Job 41:26 Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail; Nor does spear, dart, or javelin.

Job 41:27 He regards iron as straw, And bronze as rotten wood.

Job 41:28 The arrow cannot make him flee; Slingstones become like stubble to him.

Job 41:29 Darts are regarded as straw; He laughs at the threat of javelins.

Job 41:30 His undersides are like sharp potsherds; He spreads pointed marks in the mire.

Job 41:31 He makes the deep boil like a pot; He makes the sea like a pot of ointment.

Job 41:32 He leaves a shining wake behind him; One would think the deep had white hair.

Job 41:33 On earth there is nothing like him, Which is made without fear.

Job 41:34 He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride."

A crocodile? That's what some commentators say. **No way!** This is an aquatic dinosaur, what literature commonly labels a "dragon." Did they really breathe fire? They did if you believe the traditions from all over the world. Dinosaur fossils have been excavated that show a strange protuberance, with an internal cavity, on the top of the head. It is conceivable that this could have served as a sort of mixing chamber for combustible gases that would ignite

when exhaled. It's no stranger than the light of the firefly or the fire of the bombardier beetle!¹ Besides, in Isaiah 27:1 you read,

Isaiah 27:1 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

God's questions regarding these two beasts are of a moral nature. These two beasts are symbolic of the moral struggle going on behind the scenes of the universe. While reading about leviathan you also read about a more powerful malevolent being. Listen to these excerpts from verses three, four, nine, twenty-five and thirty-three:

Job 41:3 Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you?

Job 41:4 Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever?

Job 41:9 Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false; Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him?

Job 41:25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid...

Job 41:33 On earth there is nothing like him, Which is made without fear.

Something, or someone, more than a fire-breathing dragon is in view. In verse thirty-four you read,

Job 41:34 He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride."

God is talking about another dragon, another serpent - - Satan.

Why all this? Remember what you know about Job and his suffering. Satan had come to God seeking to destroy Job. God allowed Satan to attack him with suffering within carefully set boundaries.

Perhaps Job was beginning to sense a satanic dimension to his sufferings. If so, Job could take comfort in the fact that Satan was and is just as much under God's control as were the behemoth and the leviathan! God was revealing to Job that his sufferings had a purpose, even if Job could not fully comprehend it. The nature of God is to work all things together for the good of them that love Him - *- even their sufferings.*

¹ Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job*, p. 118.

Job responds to God's questions in verses one through six of chapter forty-two:

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

Job 42:2 "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.

Job 42:3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Job 42:4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'

Job 42:5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

Your questions about suffering are subdued when you see the nature of God. You can rest in His wisdom to run your life without the need for explanations. Instead of explanations, you receive revelations: Job says, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You." Something far greater than an answer to his suffering was the awareness that God was with him in his suffering. He had been led into a deeper, fuller knowledge of God than he had ever dreamed of. His sufferings had been put into their proper perspective: They were but a light affliction compared to the work of God in and through his life.

Conclusion

Scripture tells you a lot about the mystery of sin and suffering: It's origin, the satanic influence behind it, God's overruling it, and it's eventual abolishment. There will always be questions, though - - especially when it is you that is suffering!

When you are suffering, remember that it's not an *explanation* you need; it's a *revelation!*

God reveals Himself through nature, and He reveals His nature. These are sufficient for us to trust Him.