

Teaching Moments:
The Changeup
Job 40:7 – 41:34

I can't wait until baseball season opens. My son and I are avid opponents, he a Braves fan and me a Yankees fan. We rib each other about the other's team throughout the summer. Baseball season is right around the corner.

Whether you are a Braves fan or Yankees fan, there is one position that must be filled with excellence and depth, the pitcher. Inside and outside balls, the fast ball, the slider, the curve and the changeup. The changeup is thrown from the back of the hand designed to travel 8 to 15 mph slower than the fast ball. Because the batter's eye cannot follow the ball until about 30 feet in front of him, the fast and changeup balls look very similar. The batter, fooled by the appearance, often swings too early. "Strike 3, you're OUT!"

A good teacher knows when to change her method. As she watches her students, she begins to know when students need a different approach to teaching and learning. She changes methods as needed to help her students respond wisely to different circumstances. Her goal is to help them to be prepared to learn whenever they meet a changeup.

God used a changeup approach with Job. In chapter 38-39, God asked approximately sixty questions of Job. In chapters 40-41, God limited his questions to about twenty-five and changed His approach to lecture and command.

In the second half of this teaching moment, God is determined to help Job understand that God is the Creator and Lord of the universe. Job is a mere mortal created in God's image. He is just a man. He has no real power or authority except that granted to him by God.

The Changeup – 40:7-14

God's first pitch is to challenge Job's pride. Job says that he wants to speak to God face-to-face as a man speaks to a man ([13:22](#); [23:3-4](#)). God is up to the challenge. Is Job ready to take part in what he said he wanted, a conversation with God? Immediately God gives Job four fast balls in the form of questions (40:8-9).

- Will you discredit my justice?
- Will you condemn me just to prove you are right?
- Are you as strong as God?
- Can you thunder with a voice like his? (NLT)

Job is dumbfounded. After his confession in 40:4-5, Job's ability to answer God leaves him speechless.

This is where God throws his changeup pitch. Job, standing silently with his head lowered and his arms and hands limply falling at his sides, hears eight rapid-fire

As iron sharpens iron,
so a person sharpens his friends.

-- Solomon

imperatives from God (40:10-14).

- Adorn yourself with majesty and dignity.
- Clothe yourself with glory and splendor.
- Pour out the overflowings of your anger.
- Look on everyone who is proud and abase him.
- Look on everyone who is proud and bring him low.
- Tread down the wicked where they stand.
- Hide them all in the dust together.
- Bind their faces in the world below.

Job can only look foolish standing before God. In the presence of God's prosecutorial gaze and speech, Job withers away.

After throwing a changeup, God chooses a slider to throw Job's way. While Job is ready for more questions God throws a different style of pitch using the lecture method.

Behemoth (40:15-24)

Honestly, we do not know for sure what behemoth is or was. Instead of translating the word, scholars chose to transliterate the word. The most popular idea is that behemoth is a hippopotamus. Others believe that behemoth represents an elephant with a minority group suggesting that the animal is extinct. Yes, there are those that believe behemoth is a mythical animal. For our study, we lean towards the hippopotamus.

God tells Job and us that behemoth is the major player in the animal realm ([40:19](#)). Made by God, just as Job was made by God ([40:15](#)), God equips behemoth with astounding strength. His strength is both his defensive and offensive weapon ([40:16-18](#)). While he eats grass like an ox on the hillside ([40:15](#)), he resides comfortably both on land and in the water ([40:20-23](#)). Because of his size and strength, turbulent water does not frighten him ([40:23](#)).

Following the short lecture, God tests Job's understanding with a two-question quiz.

- Can one take him by his eyes?
- Or, pierce his nose with a snare?

"Job, were you paying attention? How strong is behemoth? Is it possible to assault him head-on? Has anyone captured him and paraded him around in a circus? Have people been able to harness his strength for their use?" In all this, Job does not answer.

Leviathan (41:1-34)

Without giving Job a recess or a break in the middle of the seventh inning, God rapidly moves into the next section. Let's talk about Leviathan. Who or what is leviathan? Generally, scholars believe that leviathan is a crocodile. Some picture him as an extinct dragon or dinosaur of some kind ([41:18-21](#)).

While God waited for the quiz at the end of the lecture on behemoth, God starts this lecture with a twelve-question test ([41:1-7](#)).

- Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?
- Can you press down his tongue with a cord?

As iron sharpens iron,
so a person sharpens his friends.
-- Solomon

- Can you put a rope in his nose?
- Can you pierce his jaw with a hook?
- Will he make many pleas to you?
- Will he speak to you soft words?
- Will he make a covenant with you to take him for your servant forever?
- Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you put him on a leash for your girls?
- Will traders bargain over him?
- Will they divide him up among the merchants?
- Can you fill his skin with harpoons?
- Can you fill his head with fishing spears?

In [41:8-10](#), God makes it plain that mankind fears this animal. After questioning Job and saying that people fear leviathan, God closes the introduction with two questions and a statement (41:10b-11). “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.” God’s point is simple. If you fear leviathan, how can you dare to talk with me. I created everything under heaven ([Exodus 19:5; 24:1; 50:12; 1 Corinthians 10:26](#)).

After making His point, God launches into His lecture about leviathan. He begins the lecture with more questions and then moves into explanations. He wants Job to understand the power of this animal’s limbs, “his mighty strength and his goodly frame” ([41:12](#)).

The croc’s body appears to be covered by heavy armor ([41:13, 15-17, 23, 30](#)). Try a frontal attack and you will meet a mouth full of teeth, thirty-six in the upper jaw and thirty in the lower jaw. The teeth in his lower jaw are always visible. He has the strongest bite of any animal at 5,000 psi. The saltwater crocodile of eastern India, northern Australia and southeast Asia can grow to 23 ft. in length and weigh as up to 2200 lbs. Mud wrestling with a croc is not an option. With a heart of stone, the crocodile fears nothing ([41:24-29](#)). He is the creature without fear and “the king over all the sons of pride.” ([41:33-34](#)).

God’s Point

To Job, God says concerning behemoth, “Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you” (40:15). Of leviathan, God says to Job, “Who then is he who can stand before me? Who has first given to me, that I should repay him?” (40:10-11). What is God’s point?

God made Job. He is a mere man. Everything that Job owns comes from God. Why then is Job unafraid to confront God as he would another man? While Job may have been innocent of idolatry, adultery, oppression and murder, Job suffered from an attitudinal affliction. He suffered from pride. He knew that he was not guilty of these outward sins. His knowledge led him to believe that he could stand innocent before God in his self-righteousness.

As we approach Job 42, finally, we will see what happens to Job when he realizes that he is full of pride very much like leviathan.

As iron sharpens iron,
so a person sharpens his friends.
-- Solomon