

The Teaching Moments: Job 38:1 – 41:34
The Wonder of God's Creation – 38:1-38

I'd like to remember my childhood as being perfect and me as the perfect son. I'd like to remember it that way. However, I'd be lying to you, to myself and to God. Honestly, my childhood was like most kids that grew up in my 1950s and 60s neighborhood. Good times, bad times and times you learned things the hard way.

Oh the hard way! A hurried jump from the roof of my dad's garage sent me to the emergency room for stitches on my chin. The picket on the fence missed my throat by an inch. My dad asked two questions while he grinned: "Didn't I tell you not to play on that roof? Well, did you learn your lesson?" I preferred a beating to his questions. A scar on the inside of my right kneecap received in a bicycle accident reminded me of the hazards of being in a rush when I was late on my way home. My mom's only question: "Well, you won't be in a hurry next time, will you?" After running into a telephone pole with my sled, my mom interrogated me, "Why don't you watch out where you're going?" Why didn't I think of that? After my dad and uncle rescued my brother, cousins and me from a steep hillside, my dad's only question was, "What were you thinking?" Duh, the hill was there. It needed to be conquered. And dad's all-time favorite questions to ask when I gave into peer pressure and followed the crowd: "If they all wanted to jump off a cliff would you join in? Are you a sheep?"

Certainly, mom and dad weren't looking for answers or a conversation. Oh, I wanted to answer those questions, but then I wanted my friends to recognize my face the next morning at school. Instead of this being a time for conversations about my immaturity, these times became prime teaching moments with straight-forward simple questions. These were times for me to think about the immaturity behind my behavior.

Job 38:1 – 41:34 is a grand teaching moment. God is talking. Job is listening with a downcast face looking only at his toes. I imagine that his face is red from embarrassment and that his wipes at a tear starting to form in the corner of his eye. Why did he ever demand that God come down to speak with him?

God is asking questions, nearly eighty-five questions in four chapters. Does He really expect Job to answer the questions? Does Job want to try to answer these questions? This wasn't a final exam that students took in college. This was a teaching moment that appeared at the end of thirty-five chapters of Job throwing a hissy fit because God would not explain Himself directly to Job. His three friends and Elihu tried to explain this to Job, but he would not listen. Like me, he learned things the hard way.

God speaks to Job out of a whirlwind ([38:1](#)). Forget the quiet voice that God used to speak to Elijah ([1 Kings 19:12](#)). Job unceremoniously demands to speak to God face to face, now, and so, God accommodates his wishes. From the very beginning of this severely lopsided conversation, God set the tone. As Francis Schaeffer wrote, "He is there and He is not silent." God opens with these thunderous words. "Who is this that

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

darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me” (38:2-3). Even the roar of the great Oz could not come close to matching the thundering voice of God. Job did not foresee this conversation turning into a confrontation.

As you read chapters 38-41, please hear this caution. The writer of Job records God’s speech as poetry. God is not speaking as a geologist, oceanographer, thanatologist, meteorologist, fulminologist, astronomer, zoologist, or ornithologist. The writer records God’s words in poetic form. The challenge of poetry is that it requires us to think in terms of parallelisms and contrasts, metaphors and similes, hyperbole and understatement, chiasms, clichés, hendiadys, merismus, oxymorons, personification and sarcasm. If you’re are not confused, I am. Poetry makes us think creatively.

God’s first great teaching moment with Job covers chapters 38-39. In these two chapters He asks nearly sixty questions. Eleven questions to ponder appear below. All these have to do with the universe in which we live.

- Who determined the earth’s dimensions and “stretched out the surveying lines?” (38:5 NLT).
- “Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb, and as I clothed it with clouds and wrapped it in thick darkness?” (38:8-9 NLT).
- “Have you made daylight spread to the ends of the earth, to bring an end to the night’s wickedness?” (38:13 NLT).
- “Do you know where the gates of death are located? Have you seen the gates of utter gloom?” (38:17 NLT).
- “Where does light come from, and where does darkness go?” (38:19 NLT)
- “Who created a channel for the torrents of rain? Who laid out the path for the lightning?” (38:25 NLT).
- “Can you direct the movement of the stars – binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion?” (38:31 NLT).
- “Can you make lightning appear and cause it to strike as you direct?” (38:35 NLT)

God asks many other questions. Here is a list of categories he covers in chapters 38-39. God designs each category to help Job understand that God is in control of His universe, not Job. It is not incumbent upon God to answer Job’s questions.

- Creation (38:4-7)
- The Sea (38:8-11)
- The Earth’s administration (38:12-15)
- The Underworld (38:16-18)
- Light and Darkness (38:19-21)
- Storms (38:22-30)
- Stars (38:31-33)
- Clouds (38:34-38)
- Lions and Ravens (38:39-41)
- Mountain Goats (39:1-4)

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

- Wild Donkeys (39:5-8)
- Wild Oxen (39:9-12)
- Ostriches (39:13-18)
- Horses (39:19-25)
- Hawks (39:26-30).

Did you notice the shift in God's categories at 38:39? God moves from the inanimate to the animate, from things that have no life to things that live and breathe. We'll look more in-depth at the animate objects in the next two lessons.

Here's a challenge for you. On the next clear night that comes your way, take time to go star gazing. You might have to wait until all your neighborhood lights go out. You might even need to leave your village, town or city. Get out away from the light. Take a blanket and a pillow or a lawn chair that allows you to lean back. Then stare at the universe above you. Stare at the universe that is light years from our earth. Find Orion and the Pleiades. Look for Ursa Major and Minor. Gaze through the heavens for Centaurus and Perseus. Relax and admire constellations that God created millennia before you were a twinkle in your daddy's eye. Then thank God for His wisdom, authority, power, compassion, holiness, patience and ... Thank God as you worship Him.

Here's a second challenge. Think through the hymns and contemporary songs that you know. You might be able to find an old hymnal. What lyrics reflect God's creative abilities? What lyrics reflect His character? As you think about hymns and songs, expand your consideration to other passages of Scripture that praise the creative everlasting God of our universe. Consider these passages.

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

Psalm 8:1-9	19:1-6	24:1-2	29:1-11	33:6-9	65:6-13
66:1-7	74:16	90:2-3	96:5	102:25-27	104:1-35
139:8					

Proverbs 8:22-31

Ecclesiastes 12:1-7

Isaiah 37:16 40:12, 26-31 42:5; 55:9

Jeremiah 5:22 10:11-12 14:22

Amos 9:2-3

Romans 1:19-20

Colossians 1:15-17

Hebrews 1:2

2 Peter 3:5

Revelation 4:11 10:6

Do not merely walk away from this subject. Do not say, "I believe that God created the universe, but I don't need to revisit the topic." Use this as an opportunity to worship the Omnipotent Everlasting Creator God for a month. Look closely at God's creation. Note the particulars. Note your place in His creation and bow before Him in worship.

May the Creator God bless and keep you. May He cause His face to shine upon you as you come before Him in worship.

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

-- Solomon

Copyright © by George Keralis 2020