

God Speaks – The Living Job 39

Last week we finally entered the final phase of the book of Job and began to hear God speak. Job and his friends had spoken long enough and now it was God's turn. What God revealed is that His complete control over the creation of the Earth and control over its natural process – the weather, sunrise/sunset, etc. should cause us to trust in Him, not question Him. As we study chapter 39, God transitions to speaking about the living and will do so to reinforce the same point – He is in complete control and always acts with purpose – therefore, we should trust him completely.

Goats and Deer – v.1-4

God is still using rhetorical questions to make His point to Job and He begins by referencing the life cycle of mountain goats and deer. He asks Job if he has taken the time to notice the mountain goats give birth or watch the deer in labor. Perhaps Job had seen these things but they were not priorities in his life for sure and he more than likely did not study them in great detail. God doubles down by asking if Job understood the details of their pregnancy, development, and rearing of their young.

Obviously Job does not and I think the point that God is making here is that God knows the things we don't know. It is as if God is saying to Job – “You don't even know about these things, they seem unimportant to you and yet they are critically important to me!” Not only does God know these things but He makes them happen – He oversees them. If you notice the tone of God's statements, they seem to be very casual. He knows the details, oversees these critical processes, and while important it's not as if it is difficult for Him. Certainly, while Job could not control these processes he could learn about them but it would take Him a lifetime to understand. Isn't that what scientists do today? They specialize and know 1 subject very well. I think that is God's point to a degree. It takes us so much effort to even gain a small amount of knowledge and yet He knows all. It's impressive to say the least.

Wild Donkeys and Oxen – v.5-12

In the next set of verses God uses the animal kingdom to talk about control. He asks Job, “Who set the wild donkey free?” In other words, why is the wild donkey wild? The answer is because God deems it so. It is God who made the decision to set the wild donkey free. He takes ownership of that decision. God sets it free and allows it to roam. He also asks Job about the wild oxen. Pointedly he asks if Job can control them and use them for his bidding. In other words, “Job, does the wild ox do what you want it to do?”

God is using the wild donkey and oxen to make a greater point about control. It's interesting that as humans we crave control and believe that we actually have it over many areas in our life. If we are honest with ourselves, that idea is laughable. The belief that we have control over anything is simply an illusion. You have heard the saying that if you lie to yourself long enough that you will start to believe it and that is true and I'm not sure it can be demonstrated any better than in this area of control. If I asked the question tonight, what do you control in your life I would be hard pressed to believe that any of us would admit that we control nothing completely and yet I believe that is the point God is trying to make here. He is in control – not us.

The big problem here is that often we want to control God as well. If we look back on the word of Job throughout this book, there are many instances where he demanded things of God. In a sense, Job

wanted to control God and here God is telling him, you can't even control these wild animals – don't think you can control me. But, here is the good news, we don't need to control God or anything else – He has it covered. While Job cannot trust the wild oxen to do His work, Job can trust God to look out for Him just as he cares for all other living thing. No predicament is too large for God and that is what both Job and all of us need to understand.

God's Wisdom – v.13-18

Next, God is going to lecture Job on true wisdom or the lack thereof. Admittedly this is a difficult passage and I had to go to several commentaries for help. What we read is God speaking of an ostrich and a stork. What God does is compare the two. Both are free and yet both handle it very differently.

The ostrich enjoys her freedom but as God explains she is not very wise when it comes to her eggs. On the contrary the stork is very faithful and wise. How? Simply put, the stork takes care of her eggs. A group of ostrich hens (I think that is the correct term) can lay several eggs and apparently the queen or chief lays on them, not to warm them but to cool them from the sun. What happens is that the typical nest can hold around 20 eggs. Therefore, all the excess eggs are left outside the nest – they are pushed out and trampled on. There is a lot of hard work that goes into producing and hatching these eggs and yet the ostrich mistreats and tramples on them with no regard. She has no fear or concern for her eggs like the stork does.

Why?

Because, God has deprived the ostrich of wisdom. We obviously understand that it is not wise to trample the eggs or to treat her young poorly – there is a lack of understanding there. Now, while we may not completely understand it, God has chosen to withhold this wisdom from the ostrich. This is not the case with mankind. James 1:5 clearly tells us that if a man seeks wisdom he should ask God for it who provides. So, mankind doesn't have to be like the ostrich because true wisdom is available from God. So, the point that God is trying to make here with Job is, "why are you acting like the ostrich?"

Essentially that is what God said in Job 38:2 – "Who is this who obscures my counsel with ignorant words?" God is saying that Job is being just as careless as the ostrich and if that is the case, then how can one who is lacking wisdom and understanding questioning God? The ostrich is incapable because God's wisdom is withheld but mankind is not if he will seek God.

God is telling Job, don't be the ostrich – that is not who I designed you to be and this is a lesson that we should learn as well.

The Horse – v.19-25

God briefly mentions a horse while talking about the ostrich and now he is going to expand on this animal. Obviously, this passage is talking about a warrior horse that is prepared for war.

God asks Job, "did you give the horse its strength?" Obviously Job did not and God continues to question Job about the horse's appearance and its prowess. It can do amazing things and is immensely useful to mankind. It is a method of God's grace and yet mankind has done nothing to contribute to its qualities.

Unlike Job, this horse has not displayed fear but complete trust. It knows its role and fulfills it faithfully. It does not shy away from battle but invites it. He charges in.

I have to believe that God is trying to convey the ideas of trust and obedience with Job here. War is a crazy thing – there is no comfort. Many soldiers from battle don't want to talk about the battle and struggle with the difficulty of adjusting back to normal society. However, what does the faithful soldier do? He trusts the mission and is obedient to the task laid before Him. So it is with this warrior horse. However, when we compare this with the actions of Job it does appear that Job has fallen short in a sense. He has questioned as opposed to trusting God. He has not charged ahead but been paralyzed by frustration.

God is the one who made the horse this way and He most certainly is reminding Job of that fact but I cannot help but wonder if God is also calling Job to act more like the horse by displaying full trust and obedience.

The Hawk and Eagles– v.26-30

God rounds out his words about the living by speaking about birds of the air. Specifically God speaks of the Hawk and the Eagle. The ability of these birds to fly is an example of the power and majesty of God. Not only can they fly but they fly with purpose and are skilled birds of prey. Their eyesight is keen as are their instincts to locate prey. Everything down to the finest detail, such as where they will build their nest, is controlled by God.

This is yet another example of the vastness of God's knowledge, control, and might. While God has detailed several animals, we must remember that there are a vast number that have not been listed as well and He knows of and controls every detail of their lives as well. This is immense knowledge and yet we as very fallible humans have the tendency to question God when we know so little.

These chapters together and four round of questions to Job demonstrate God's greatness compared with the large limits of mankind. Which such limits, we have no place to question God – it is not rational. God want's Job to know that He has everything covered and that He can be trusted. This is a lesson that He desperately wants us to learn as well.

Practical Implications

1. Everything down to the finest details are important to God
2. We mustn't buy into the illusion of control
3. As believers we must be strive to attain God's wisdom and be careful not to act like those who have no regard for it.
4. If animals lower than mankind in the creation order can practice complete obedience and trust, so should we.
5. Meditating on the vastness of God is the only way for our heart to be in line with God's (to take flight like the birds of the air)

