

How Do I Deal With God? Job 40-41

For the past few weeks we have heard God speak and ask Job a series of rhetorical questions. These questions centered on God's power and authority concerning both the Earth, creation, and living things. These questions fully demonstrated to Job that only God is in complete control. Job's complaints at times appeared question God's authority and decision making and God is now setting the record straight. In the grand scheme of things, Job is powerless to control things and therefore is in no place to question God's handling of things. While speaking, God fully displays his mercy and care for his creation as well as his power and purpose in all things. Tonight God demands an answer from Job while doubling down on the comparison between His authority and Job's. The main point communicated in this passage is that we must be careful how we deal with God.

I. Who Do You Think You Are?

At the beginning of chapter 40 we encounter a break in the questioning of Job. What we see is God putting Job in his place. It is almost as if God is checking in on Job to see if He has gotten His point across – almost as if God is asking Job, “Do you still feel the same way?”

We have seen God speak about his control and purpose in the creation of the Earth and in His dealing with the creatures of the Earth. Now God wants to know if Job feels as though he is in a position to correct God. The specific question is, “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?”

Isn't this an interesting statement? From a distance, we can easily see ourselves looking down on Job and recognizing the folly of his ways. Who is Job to question God? Who is Job to propose a better plan? Those are very valid questions and we would be right to have that point of view. However, what is interesting is that regularly we are guilty of playing the role of Job. We are guilty of questioning the ways of God. If you are honest with yourself, how many times have you asked the question, “Why me?”? We all have done that and in doing so we are questioning the sovereignty of God. I believe that is the point that God is trying to make here.

God moves on and essentially backs Job into a corner by demanding an answer from him as he states, “Let him who argues with God give an answer.” This is God's way of saying to Job, “Go ahead big boy, you are the one with a better idea – a better plan. Since I'm going about this all wrong why don't you tell me the correct way?” Now we all know that is a ridiculous statement and as we read we quickly realize that Job understands that as well.

Job's response is “I am so insignificant. How can I answer you?” The reality is that the majesty and power of God has this effect on people. In Isaiah 6 we read of a similar response as the prophet Isaiah finds himself before God. His response was, “Woe is me for I am ruined (I must be silent) because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Armies.” In the presence of God, Isaiah quickly realized who he was in comparison to who God was. This is the same realization that Job had, not to mention all that God had made clear in his previous round of questioning. Job wanted to think that he had it all figured out and we are often guilty of feeling the same way. I'm smart right? You are smart right? We can do this, we can control this. When we come to recognize who God is, we quickly realize that nothing could be farther from the truth and our mouth begins to shut real fast. Who has ever had the thought, “when I get to heaven I'm going

to ask this..." I hate to break your heart but you're not going to ask that. You are going to worship because there is no other appropriate response when you come before the one true creator God.

Job tells us that he places his hand over his mouth. That is interesting as well and I believe there is a lesson in that simple statement for us. Job had questioned his predicament multiple times. He didn't like it nor would any of us and yet God was using it for a purpose. Why would Job place his hand over his mouth? Because his natural fleshly inclination was to speak up – to question – to propose a better idea and yet now before the presence of God he knew this was not the right course of action. Knowing himself, he was intentional about what he knew to be right. He took the extra step in covering his own mouth with his hand. Our fleshly nature wants to do the same thing – it wants to question and yet we must be intentional about pursuing the things of God. As in all things, Jesus should serve as our example. In Matthew 26:39, Jesus prays to God the Father saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me." Why would Jesus pray that? Because, He was completely human and in His humanity, He did not want to suffer. However, what comes next is crucial. Jesus goes on to say, "Yet not as I will, but as you will." That is the key. Jesus didn't want to suffer, you and I don't want to suffer, and yet Jesus knew that God's will was of primary importance. He trusted God the Father because of the relationship He had with Him. When we encounter difficult moments, do we begin to question or do we place our hand over our mouth and continue on with the thought of, "Yet not as I will, but as you will."?

II. You Won't Get Off That Easy

I believe that Job's response is correct. There is nothing to say as God has made His point quite clear. Job has a role to play and it isn't to question God. However, God isn't going to let Job off the hook just yet. Instead He continues to pour it on by demanding an answer from Job.

"When I question you, you will inform me." It surely feels like there is a parent-child dynamic going on here. How many of you have stood before your parents (perhaps when you were younger) and your parent just pours it on and continues to ask questions and demand answers when in reality there was nothing to say – you made a poor decision and it's that simple. I believe there is some of that going on here and God wants to make it crystal clear that Job's desire to question is wrong and instead his desire and motivation should be to trust.

"Would you really challenge my justice? Would you declare me guilty to justify yourself?"

These two questions by God really get to the heart of the matter. What was Job's underlying motivation? Obviously he didn't want to deal with the pain and suffering he was dealing with. Even greater though, Job didn't feel as though he deserved it. As a result, Job was willing to declare himself innocent and doing so implied that God was guilty. Really, God was asking Job if he would seriously throw Him under the bus in order to escape his predicament. You can imagine God saying, "after all the things I've done for you!"

Revealed here is a great problem found in our human nature. We are always looking out for #1 and fail to recognize that as a sinner, God owes us nothing. Job felt as though his actions and righteousness deserved better and yet as sinners, Scripture clearly tells us that we deserve nothing but God's wrath. Job's perspective is wrong and ultimately it causes him to deal with God wrongly. Instead of praise for all the blessing that God had provided, Job focused on the difficulties that he encountered. Often, we are very guilty of doing the same. God's grace and mercy abound.

Count your blessings, name them one by one, count your many blessings see what God has done! The fact that we are breathing today is such a blessing and regardless of the difficulties we encounter the opportunity that we have to spend eternity with our creator by following Christ is enough reason alone to worship and be thankful.

How do we deal with God? Are we willing to throw Him under the bus to justify ourselves or do we trust Him completely and count the many blessings we have received even though we deserve none of them?

God goes on to question Job some more emphasizing His power. Ultimately God is asking Job, “Can you handle the things I can? Let’s see it!”

Job has claimed to have a better plan and now God wants to put him on the spot – again, much like a parent/child relationship.

Adorn yourself with majesty and splendor and clothe yourself with honor and glory. In other words, are you the deity? Get dressed for the part son! I want to see this. Show me your majesty and splendor – where is it?

Can you handle the wicked like I can? Can you put them in their place? Do you have control over life and death?

Show me what you have got! Show it to me and I will concede that maybe you do have a better plan, that you can deliver yourself but the reality is Job that you don’t know half of what is going on even though you think you have it all figured out. You know that, you just need to admit it! I alone am the deliverer.

III. Behemoth and Leviathan

As we transition to the latter half of chapter 40 and all of 41, God is going to make an additional point using two giant beasts – Behemoth and Leviathan. Now we could spend some time hypothesizing what exactly these beasts are – dinosaurs, dragons, or something else but I think that would only miss the larger point of what is going on here. Both of these beast demand respect. If that is the case, how much more respect does God – the creator of the world – demand?

Immediately God makes a comparison between Behemoth and Job. God draws Job’s attention to Behemoth – a giant creature that Job knows of and more than likely has dealt with – this is a real being. What does God say about it initially? “Which I made along with you.” It is possible that I am wrong on this but I read this a slap in the face to Job.

1. This is a call on Job to remember that God is the creator. Look Job, I did this - you didn’t.
2. I made this creature along with you! How do you compare?

Look how strong he is
Look how large he is
He is the foremost of my works

(Now we know that humanity was God's greatest creation – very good vs. good, but here God is pointing out that Behemoth is a remarkable creation in his own right and there are many qualities that he possesses that Job simply does not!)

Behemoth is confident and cannot be captured – he is unafraid.

*Now Job, let's compare that with your recent situation. Can you say the same for yourself? Just a little affliction and look at you!

Now let's look at Leviathan...

Look how mighty Leviathan is! Can you contain or control him?

Verse 4 is very interesting – will he make a covenant with you so that you can take him as a slave?

*It is possible that God is drawing a comparison between God and mankind and mankind and Leviathan. Is it possible that mankind looks at himself in such a lofty way and yet God can make a covenant with mankind and demand his obedience – and yet, mankind cannot do the same with a simple beast.

As if this didn't put Job in his place, God goes on to ask, Is Leviathan a pet for your kids Job?

Most certainly he is not – mankind cannot even contain him long enough to sell or trade him.

In either situation God makes it very clear that any attempt to do so would be instantly regretted.

There is no hope of capturing this beast.

The mere sight of him produces immense fear. No one can contain this beast! He demands respect.

This is the point that God reinforces in verse 10 – If Leviathan demands respect – If you deal with him carefully, then how much more careful should you be with me?

You don't believe me? Let's go down the list!

- His pure power
- His double layer of armor
- Flames from his mouth (a comparison to God's wrath?)
- Immense strength
- No fear
- All of man's weapons are useless against him
- No equal on earth!
- He is king!

This is a powerful and mighty animal that I believe did certainly exist – Job knew of it and recognized what God was speaking about but I firmly believe God had a much greater point to make than simply drawing Job's attention to His great creation.

God was reminding Job of who He was – yes the creator, but more importantly the creator that exemplified the qualities of these two beasts x 1000!

Job respected these beasts and tread carefully around them because He knew what they were capable of and yet He did not treat God with the same respect. Instead of respect and trust, Job was quick to question and doubt what God was doing.

God clearly makes the point that He demands respect.

Personal Implications

1. Do we have a biblically correct perception of ourselves?
2. Do we intentionally trust? (Put our hand over our mouth)
3. Do we recognize that God owes us nothing?
4. Do we honor God with the respect he deserves and demands?