***Job: A Study in Suffering…And Faith***

Lesson Thirteen: God’s Second Challenge to Job/Job’s Answer/Epilogue

(Job 40:6-42:17)

***Objective(s):***

1. Be able to identify the overall purpose of God’s speeches.

2. Be able to suggest the reason for God’s differing responses to the three friends and Job.

1. **God challenged Job to display his power (40:6-14).**
   1. Although Job had indicated his intention to be silent, God was not finished teaching him and thus He began a second speech in the same way that the first one was begun (v. 7; cf. 38:3).
   2. God asked Job if he would question/deny the justice of God (v. 8).
      1. Job had indeed called the justice of God into question and had essentially implied that he was more righteous than God by affirming his own righteousness rather than God’s.
      2. This was the reason that Elihu was angry with Job (32:2).
   3. God asked Job if he was as powerful as God was (vv. 9-14).
      1. If so, then he was encouraged to show his strength by executing judgment on the wicked.
      2. The expression “bind their faces in the world below” (“bind their faces in hidden *darkness*” – NKJV; v. 13) seems to be an allusion to death.1
      3. If Job could do this, God would confess Job’s greatness.
2. **God described the behemoth and the leviathan (40:15-41:34).** [See the discussion of the identification of “behemoth” and “leviathan” below in section IV]
   1. While this speech does not consist largely of questions as did God’s first speech, Job was still evidently being challenged.
      1. God had made this beast even as He had Job, yet Job was unable to control it (vv. 15, 24).
      2. The point of the description is this: if Job could not even compare in power with the creation of God, how could he hope to contend with God Himself?
   2. The “behemoth” was a very strong, herbivorous creature – one of the greatest or mightiest creatures which God had made (40:15-20).
   3. The “leviathan,” like the behemoth, was evidently a very fierce and powerful creature – one which man had failed to domesticate (41:1-34).
      1. Resuming his method of lengthy questioning, God asked Job if he had subdued the leviathan (vv. 1-8).
      2. If Job was unable to overcome leviathan, how could he stand against Jehovah God (vv. 9-11)?
      3. Job was given a panoramic view of the leviathan, a description which emphasized his inapproachability (vv. 12-34).
3. **Job’s answer (41:1-6)**
   1. Job had grasped the Lord’s message (vv. 1-3).
      1. He confessed the omnipotence of God (v. 2).
      2. He also realized that he had spoken in areas in which he had no knowledge or understanding of the workings of God (v. 3).
   2. Job repented (vs. 4-6).
      1. The Lord had suggested that Job must answer Him (38:3; 40:7) and now Job requested the opportunity to be heard (v. 4).
      2. Whereas after the first speech Job decided to be silent, he now went further by expressing his repentance for his questioning of God (vv. 5-6).
4. **Additional Material on the Identity of “Behemoth” and “Leviathan”**
   1. The first question to be addressed is whether the creatures described are actual animals or allusions to myths.
      1. While some of the descriptions do seem to be hyperbolic (e.g., 41:18-21; note, however, the frequent mention of “dragons” in secular histories), the context seems to indicate actual animals.
      2. If the reason for the Lord mentioning these creatures at all is considered, it seems unlikely that He would turn to mythical creatures.
         1. Why should Job be impressed with God’s strength because he (Job) cannot measure in power with mythical creatures?
         2. Are there no beasts in God’s creation who could be cited as more powerful than man and disdainful of man’s ability?
      3. In summary, for these creatures to be mythical would certainly weaken the argument that God was making in these chapters.
   2. Assuming that actual animals are being described, **which animals** were being described?
      1. The most common suggestions are that the behemoth is the hippopotamus and the leviathan is the crocodile.
      2. Another suggestion made for the behemoth is the elephant.2
      3. Other suggestions for the identity of leviathan include the whale and the dolphin.3
   3. There are a number of details in the description of the behemoth that do not fit the hippopotamus. Jackson makes a pretty good case for identifying this beast with one of the larger dinosaurs.4
      1. The most popular objections to this suggestion are that *“man and dinosaurs did not live at the same time”* or *“dinosaurs didn’t really live on the earth.”*
      2. The assertion that dinosaurs preceded man by millions of years is answered by a cursory reading of the creation account in Genesis. This assertion is a tenet of the General Theory of Evolution, but even evidence from the natural world (God’s other witness) supports the idea that men and dinosaurs were contemporaries.
      3. Some may wish to deny the existence of dinosaurs (perhaps as a response to the General Theory of Evolution), but the evidence that dinosaurs did roam the earth in the past is quite compelling.
   4. The same comments could be made with reference to the leviathan. The crocodile seems inadequate for the description given. The dolphin hardly fits the description given Job and the whale, while perhaps coming closer, still seems to fall short of the creature described (e.g., vv. 15-16). It seems more likely that leviathan should be identified with an aquatic dinosaur now extinct.
5. **The restoration of the three friends (42:7-10a)**
   1. The three friends were rebuked (v. 7).
      1. The Lord addressed Eliphaz, evidently the oldest of the three, as the representative of the group. Note that in the debate with Job, Eliphaz was the first of the friends to speak in each cycle.
      2. The friends had not “spoken of Me (God) what is right.” By contrast, Job was vindicated as having spoken that which was right about God (note that this analysis was repeated twice; vv. 7-8).
         1. God must have had in mind a specific context because it is evident that Job did indeed speak rashly.
         2. I believe that Wayne Jackson captured the point of the Lord’s statement in his following comment:5
            1. *The Lord's charge against the three ash-heap philosophers was that they had not spoken of Him “the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath” (42:7b). This seems to present a problem, for one recalls that Job’s friends had spoken many true things about God, and, as a matter of fact, the patriarch had accused his Maker of injustice. Accordingly, it is obvious that in this charge against Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, Jehovah’s attention is focused in a rather specific area. First, there is the cause of suffering. The critical three had vigorously argued that* ***suffering is always sent by God as a direct consequence of sin, and in proportion thereto.*** *Job denied such. In this matter, they were wrong and he was right.*
      3. Observe the following points of emphasis in the words of the Lord:
         1. As previously noted, the Lord mentioned the “rightness” of Job twice (vv. 7b, 8b).
         2. In contrast to the friends’ opinion that Job was a grievous sinner, the Lord described Job as His “servant” no less than four times in two verses (vv. 7-8).
   2. Eliphaz was informed of the requirements of restoration (42:8-10).
      1. They were to offer as burnt offerings seven bulls and seven rams and to seek Job’s intercession in prayer on their behalf.
      2. Examine the stipulation of God in light of Eliphaz’s comment regarding Job in 22:29-30.
      3. Verse 10 indicates that Job did indeed pray for his friends, a tribute to his character in view of their strenuous criticism of him.
6. **Restoration of Job’s prosperity (42:10b-17)**
   1. After his prayer for his friends, Job had his material prosperity restored (vv. 10, 12).
      1. Job was, in fact, given twice what he had possessed before his trials.
      2. The language would admit of a gradual accumulation of animals through normal and fruitful reproduction.6
   2. Job again enjoyed the comfort of family and friends (42:11, 13).
      1. Evidently those who had previously deserted him now came and sought to comfort Job, bringing him gifts.
      2. He also had additional children, seven sons and three daughters – the same number as he had before his losses in the beginning of the book.
   3. The restoration of Job's health was not specifically stated, but the number of years that he lived after his affliction (140) implicitly made this point (vv. 16-17).

**Endnotes:**

1Gibson, p. 220. 2Jackson, pp. 85-6. 3*Ibid*. 4Jackson, p. 86.

5Jackson, p. 93. 6Jackson, p. 95.

***Study & Discussion Questions:***

1. Of what did God accuse Job in 40:8?
2. What challenge did God issue to Job in 40:9-13?
3. What animals did God cite in chapters 40-41? Why?
4. Did God in this speech explain to Job why he was suffering?
5. Of what did Job repent (cf. 42:6)?
6. Why was the Lord’s anger aroused against the three friends?
7. In what sense had Job spoken that which was right about God (cf. 42:7)?
8. Why do you suppose that Elihu was not included in the rebuke of verse 7?