

Title: Job's First Response to the God of the Whirlwind

Number: 1223Job40:3-5(40)

Text: 40:3-5

Central Idea: God hears the deafening roar of our silence

Date: December 3, 2023

{Read Text / Prayer}

40:1–5 1 Then the LORD said to Job, 2 “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.” 3 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 4 “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 “Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more.”

[i] This past week I came across this story . . .

Told by N.T. scholar D.A. Carson. I thot it appropriate for today.

Carson shares a story about a Xn family w/a 15 y.o. daughter who lost her best friend to leukemia. This friend was a beautiful young girl, vigorous, athletic, smart. She appeared to be in perfect health. Suddenly, despite t/best efforts of good medical care, she was gone in 6 mos.

This family was vibrant in their commitment to JC. They talked about what had happened, prayed, grieved.

Some time later, t/father went by his daughter's room & heard sobbing. He tapped on t/door & went in. He put his arms around her & said, "Come on, tell me about it." Thru t/tears she said, "Daddy, God could have saved my best friend & he didn't. I hate him"

As Carson tells the story ==>

The father said, "You know, I'm so glad you've told me this. There's no point in hiding it in any case. God knows what you're thinking. He knows your thoughts before you actually think them yourself. You might as well be honest before Him. There's no point in pretending. I'm glad you felt free enough to tell me, but before you decide that God is a miserable wretch, I want you to think about two things.

First, do you really want a God like t/genie in Aladdin's lamp? . . .

It could do absolutely anything, perform any miracle, but is always under t/control of whoever holds & rubs t/lamp. Do you want a G. like that? So G. can do absolutely anything, but always at your beck & call? In which case, who is G.? Do you really want a God like that? Are you wiser than God to tell him what he should & shouldn't do?"...

Then t/father said, "T/other thing is this: Before you decide that G. doesn't love you, you have to face t/fact that, in t/Bible, G's. love is measured by a little hill o/s Jerus. When nothing else seems fair, when nothing else seems right, & when t/pain is unbearable, yes, you remember that you lost your friend, but don't you dare forget that G. lost his Son. In fact, He didn't lose him, He gave him. When you can't pull it all together, at least fasten on that. Because nothing else will stabilize you."

That is wise advice. However, it wasn't just any father. You see, Dr. Carson was talking about *his* daughter.

[ii] When we suffer we often think bad things: about others — even about God

It's almost like we think G. doesn't know what's on our hearts.

We say hurtful things, bad things, & t/cat's out of the bag so to speak.

Or is it?

Carson is right ==>

God knows what you're thinking. He knows your thoughts before you actually think them yourself. You might as well be honest before him.

God knows.

God hears the deafening roar of our silence

[iii] I think this is Job here in this pivotal little point in chapter 40

He doesn't have much to say.

But I think there's still much in his mind & heart.

God hears the deafening roar of our silence

Our outline bookends the first part, where we started in chapter 38.

There our main point was this ==>

I. God's First Reply to Job: Who Are You? (38:1-40:2)

G's 1st reply indicates there's at least 1 more (there is). That fact indicates to me that Job still had much to learn. He clearly repents in t/end, but that's after G's 2d address.

I. God's First Reply to Job: Who Are You? (38:1-40:2)

Goes back to t/beg. of chapt. 38

38:1-2 1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”

1st we see it’s t/LORD that is speaking. YHWH - God’s personal covt. name. Almighty G., YHWH, asks Job a question:

38:2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”

“Who is this” could be understood in the sense of “Who are you?” (cf. “Who do you think you are?”)

[iv] Chapters 38-39 God lectures Job on His Greatness in who He is as God — namely as Creator

G. goes thru a panoply of His created order. How he not only created t/galaxies, He providentially holds them together. True of all creation, whether inanimate matter (earth; stars) or things that are animate (living beings — fish, birds, animals — even people: t/crown of His creation).

[v] Remind you by way of overview of where we’ve been
B. God as Prosecuting Attorney and Judge (38:4-39:30)

We are in court, G’s court where He presides as prosecutor & judge.

First thing ==>

1. Job’s Finiteness: Were You There? (38:4-11)

a. Questions about the earth (38:4-7)

(1) Creation (38:4-7)

38:4–6 4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, 5 Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? 6 “On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone,

(a) God is the architect (4-5a)

(b) God is the surveyor (v 5b)

(c) God is the engineer (v 6)

His work so spectacularly glorified and pleased Him ==>

(d) God’s Work Applauded by Angels (7)

38:7 . . . the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy

b. Questions about the sea (38:8-11)

(1) Birth of the Sea (38:8-9)

Where the sea is likened to a woman giving birth. It burst forth from t/womb and was wrapped in swaddling cloths.

(2) Boundaries of the Sea (38:10-11)

38:10–11 10 [God] placed boundaries on it and set a bolt and doors, 11 [He] said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves stop’?

All of this parallels t/creation account in Gen. 1 when G. declared his creation to be “very good.”

1. Job’s Finiteness: Were You There? (38:4-11)

2. Job’s Experience: Have You? (38:12-30)

a. Questions about Light and Darkness (38:12-15)

38:12 “Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place,

b. Questions about Unexplored places (38:16-17)

38:17 “Have the gates of death [Sheol] been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?

c. Questions about the Seasons and Weather (38:22–30)

Everything from ==>

(1) Expanse of the Earth (18)

(2) Light and Darkness (19-21)

(3) Snow and Hail (22-23)

(4) Lightening and East Winds (24)

(5) Rain (25-27)

(6) Ice and Frost — Father / Mother Metaphor (28-30)

Then G. ?s ==>

3. Job’s Ability: Can You? (38:31-41)

a. Questions about stars and clouds (38:31–38)

Can Job “bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?” Can Job “lead forth a constellation in its season, and guide the Bear with her satellites?”

Can Job call rain upon t/earth or cause t/lightening to strike its ordained mark.

Then we had a wonderful time exploring G’s work among t/animal K.D.

b. Questions about the animal kingdom (38:39–41)

(1) Lions (38:39–40)

(2) Ravens (38:41)

Can Job provide food for t/lion and her cubs? What about t/Raven and her young?

3. Job's Ability: Can You? (38:31-41)

4. Job's Knowledge: Do You Know? (39:1-4)

a. Questions about the animal kingdom, continued (39:1-4)

(1) Mountain goats and deer (39:1–4)

Does Job know the time they give birth according to G's timetable? What about how when their young grow strong enough to set out on their own?

Lastly, we looked at ==> *Shaddai* - cf. 40:2

5. Job's Impotence: Who is Almighty? (39:5-30)

a. Questions about the animal kingdom, continued (39:5-30)

(1) The Wild Donkey: Independent Existence (39:5–8)

(2) The Wild Oxen: Fearsome Power (39:9–12)

(3) The Ostrich: Humorous Indifference (39:13–18)

(4) The War Horse: Dark and Terrible (39:19–25)

(5) The Hawk: Graceful Flight (39:26)

(6) The Eagle: Life, Death (39:27–30)

All of this under t/heading ==>

I. God's First Reply to Job: Who Are You? (38:1-40:2)

Next, in response ==>

II. Job's First Reply to God: I Am Insignificant (40:3-5)

Affirming insignificance isn't t/same as admitting guilt.

God hears the deafening roar of our silence.

A. Job's Admission (40:3-4)

B. Job's Declaration (40:5)

A. Job's Admission: Short of Repentance (40:3-4)

1. As far as speeches go, this is the shortest in the book (2 vv.)

a. Note that this short speech admits little

“The absence of any note of regret and the reference to his previous speeches without any qualification of them suggest that he still stands by what he has said.” [David J. A. Clines]

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 4 “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth.”

A. Job's Admission: Short of Repentance (40:3-4)

1. What does Job admit? “Insignificance”

a. Ambiguous

1st word of v. 4 “behold” (overlooked in some transl.) is Heb. *hen*. Word is often translated “behold” or “see” or “look.” But also “since” or “if.” In fact, “if” is a common translation.

4 **“IF I am insignificant** [as you have demonstrated]; **what can I reply to You? . . .**

A. Job’s Admission: Short of Repentance (40:3-4)

2. Word “Insignificant” = “light in weight” (in contrast to a word that means “heavy” or “weighty”)

“I’m a lightweight” / OR “If I’m a lightweight” —
“what can I say to you?”

3. Then he adds (v. 4) ==>

4b **“ . . . I lay my hand on my mouth.”**

a. We saw that gesture twice before in Job (both used by him)

21:5 (Job pleads for sympathy from his friends at his condition)
“Look at me, and be astonished, and put your hand over your mouth.”

Chapt. 29 (Job speaks of the “good old days” when, as he sees it, G. was with him // had his children // prosperous.

7 “When I went out to the gate of the city, when I took my seat in the square, 8 The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men arose and stood. 9 The princes stopped talking and put their hands on their mouths;”

Could refer to being dumbfounded / astonished // expression of silence // humility. I’m going to go with silence over humility.

Does not appear that Job is broken, not completely.

God hears the deafening roar of our silence.

4. David Clines in his deeply exegetical commentary ==>

“. . . the wording of Job’s brief reply does not suggest capitulation; if anything, it is a re-affirmation of his previous speeches. . . . Only in 42:4–6 will we hear his final decision; here he merely says that he will not further prosecute his case.” {sum up}

A. Job’s Admission: Short of Repentance (40:3-4)

B. Job’s Declaration: Committed to Silence (40:5)

1. In verse 5 he uses a common Hebrew figure of speech
5 “Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add nothing more.”

a. Does not mean that Job has spoken two or three times —
But “again and again” or “over and over.”
He has stated his case & will add nothing more.

(1) I think Job is still (hesitantly) holding to his earlier opinions
31:35–36 35 “Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, 36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown.
He is silenced, but not yet broken.

2. This is an interpretive judgment I’m making
When Job replies to God’s two speeches by saying:
4 “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 “Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add nothing more.”

—He is not at the place of full repentance.

I realize that this interpretation may chafe against t/central point I made in t/previous 4 messages that brot us from chpt. 38 to this point.

Tough questions melt in the light of God's nature.

Certainly, when we see G. in t/totality of who He is, our ?s of “why” become mute. No one will stand B4 him on that final day w/any complaints. “Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Some will do that in worship.

Most will do it in judgement.

Yes,

Tough questions melt in the light of God's nature.

Certainly Job has become mute. Job seemingly bites his tongue.

He is sobered; he may be humbled; he's not broken.

His ?s may be melting; they are not completely melted.

3. Five reasons why I interpret it this way

a. The words Job uses are ambiguous

We've pointed that out. He admits he's insignif. // says he has no more to say // he covers his mouth. All of that can be read in a neutral or even a neg. sense. Ambiguity here.

b. Job doesn't say anything that clearly indicates he's repentant

This point goes along with the 1st.

c. God continues his correction

40:6 to 41:34. You've got over 50 vv. that follow 40:6 ==>

40:6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm . . .

Why does G. cont. to admonish Job? Bc Job still doesn't quite get it.

d. Job's attitude is quite different in chapter 42

42:1–6 1 Then [after God's 2d speech] Job answered the LORD and said, 2 "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." 4 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' 5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; 6 Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."

e. Some weighty scholars agree with me — many of them

"[Job] continues to stand behind his avowal of innocence" [Hartley].
"He certainly does not indicate any regret for what he has said."
[David J. A. Clines]

"Job admits that he cannot answer, but he still does not admit to any sin, so there is no 'confession'. Nor does he retract any of his former statements, so there is no 'submission'. On the contrary, he seems to be sticking to his guns. He has already spoken once, and need say no more. . . . This suggests that Job has nothing to say that he has not already said." [Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 307–308]

Another uses t/analogy of Job’s silence being akin to our modern-day “pleading the 5th”

(invoking 5th Amendment of t/US Constit. to avoid self-incrimin.).

Where do we go from here? We have 50-something more vv. to cover in God’s subsequent speech. Here are some takeaways from today.

1. God knows your heart.

God hears the deafening roar of our silence.

A dear friend of mine, when I was struggling so deeply w/?s following t/loss of Giana, encouraged me to be honest w/God. His words were “He has big shoulders.” I’d encourage you to be honest w/G. Tell Him your struggles. If you’re attitudes are sinful and faithless, confess that to Him.

God hears the deafening roar of our silence.

He even hears what we don’t see in ourselves. BTIM, we have blind spots. There may be pockets of sin in our lives (actions / attitudes) that we are blind toward.

David’s prayer should be ours:

Psalm 139:23–24 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.

2. God is long-suffering with you.

We see that w/Job, don't we?

If you know JC as your L&S, G.will see you thru all t/muck and mire of this life. All t/sin (your sin) // suffering // doubts & ?s.

Phil. 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:7–8 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

Romans 8:28–30 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

As to v. 28 [^], John R. MacDuff, Scottish Presbyterian minister in the 19th century, wrote the following:

“The apostle here makes the glorious assertion that whatever befalls God's children—their joys, sorrows, comforts, crosses, losses—all are a part of a Divine plan and arrangement, whose issue and result is their good. There is nothing so incredible to unbelief as this. That bitter pang which tore up my hopes by the root! That unexpected poverty! That anguished sickbed! That crushing bereavement! How can I write "good" upon these? How can this broken heart ever endorse such a statement as that of the sacred writer?... Paul would have uttered what no ... Christian would have asserted, had he said "we see." But observe, his language is the utterance of believing trust.... He says, "we know."... Let us be assured of this: He has our best interests at heart. He has what is here called our GOOD in view. It may not be, it will not be, the world's definition of good—riches, honors, glory, worldly prosperity. But it will be better. It is our soul's good, ripening the immortal part of us for glory.”

1. God knows your heart.

2. God is long-suffering with you.

3. We ought to be long-suffering with each other.

Note the basis of this in our election . . .

Col. 3:12–15 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Similarly Peter ==>

1 Peter 1:22–23 22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

2 biblical words that sum up what I esteem in others w/i t/CH as well as what I try to emulate in my own life: Heb. *Hesed* / Gk. ἐπιεικὲς

Hesed is used often in t/OT, esp. in t/Psalms of G's long-suffering w/us. Usu. transl. "lovingkindness". More than that.

It's covenant faithfulness // loyalty.

We ought to be faithfully loyal to t/CH & ea. other.

Gk. ἐπιεικὲς is used, for example, in Phil. 4:5 where it's transl. by t/NAS as "gentle spirit" — "Let your gentle spirit be known to all men." It's 1 of those words hard to capture in Engl.

"reasonableness" / "moderation" / "gentleness"

I like "reasonableness." As someone once said, "Good people are reasonable people." That should be true in t/CH.

I have lots of experience w/the unreasonable. Leaders & members. Could tell you stories about t/many who have gotten upset w/me or others or something that we do that caused them to make a stink & move on to another CH (where they usu. repeat their behavior).

Good leaders are reasonable // people.

Want to be a CH characterized by *Hesed* (loyalty) & ἐπιεικὲς (sweet reasonableness). I think, by & large we are that.

That has been obv. in how you have treated us in t/aftermath of losing our daughter. Esp. me, when I was unable to get back into ministry & when I've been slow in getting to 100%. Still not there (close). You have been loyal & reasonable — to t/excess.

3. God patiently disciplines those He loves.

Again, we see that w/Job. No, t/result of Job's initial suffering (loss of his wealth, health, children) was not because of sinful behavior. Job was and remained an upright man who feared G. and turned from evil. However, in enduring suffering he opened t/door to bitterness & a misrepresentation of G. G. patiently disciplined him for that.

Hebrews 12:5–11 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

4. Repentance begins at the Cross.

Was a little diff. for Job. For him, it began w/his faith in YHWH & in His promises. T/apogee of G's promise was fulfilled 2 millenia later when G t/Son came to earth. To live as t/sinless Lamb of God & to die for t/sin of Job & t/rest of t/O.T. saints who were justified by faith.

We'll see Job's repentance as a believer in chapter 42.

We who believe, who have been born again & repented of our sin — we still live lives of repentance. It began at t/Cross when we saw our sin for t/1st time & believed in JC as t/one who died for us.

Even now, when we sin, when we feel dirty, we flee to t/same Cross. For we on this side of t/Cross? It starts there. It ends there.

Listen to this poem about X & how t/words reflect what we've seen in Job about God's majesty in creation:

What grace is this that brought my Savior down?
That made him stoop to leave his throne and crown?
The One who mode the stars, the sea,
The One who threw out every galaxy;
What condescension, oh, how can it be?
What pain he suffered and what agony,
When on the cross, he died
For sinners crucified.
What grace is this? What grace is this?

What grace is this? What grace is this? Grace avail. for you today ...