

Job 38-41 - When God speaks

Study 5



Personal Preparation 1

We haven't heard from God since chapter 2. We've heard a lot **about** God, but not much **from** him. Now after a lot of hot wind, a lot of theories, and a lot of people who know a lot less than they think, God enters the fray. It's what Job has been hoping for...but will he like the answer?

Read Job 38-39, the first half of God's speech.

1. Who is it that God answers? Does that say anything about the friends?

2. Throughout Job's speeches, it's like he wants to summon God to a court to answer for what's going on. When you read these chapters, does it feel like God is the defendant or prosecutor?

3. What is God pointing out to Job in these chapters?

4. Do you think this answers Job's complaints and situation?

THINK: Job gets here what he's been asking for - God to appear and answer him. Why do you think God doesn't act in this way now?

Personal Preparation 2

We're halfway through God's answer to Job, and so far it's centred around the fact that God alone can order and understand creation. Is that his whole argument though?

Read Job 40-41, the second half of God's speech.

1. What does God demand of Job after the first part of his response? (40:1-2)

2. How is Job's request for God to answer him turning out? (40:3-5)

3. What challenge does God have for Job with regards to justice? (40:6-14)

4. What two animals does God talk about in the rest of these chapters, and how do you think they answer the charges Job has brought against God?

THINK: How do you think Job's words so far have brought God's justice into question?

Discussion Questions - When God Speaks

Through the whole book Job has been asking for an audience with God, and we've been wondering what God would say to Job. Would God tell Job what's been going on and why he's suffered? Would he rebuke Job for the things he's been saying about him? Would he tell him he should have listened to his friends? Or would he just squash him like a bug and be done with him?

TO START: From what you know of Job, do you think that God owes Job an explanation?

Read Job 38

1. All book, Job has been on the attack with question after question. What does God point out to Job?
2. How does this relate to the questions Job has been asking?
3. Would you say this is an appropriate response from God to Job?

Read Job 40:1-14

In these verses we come to the central and clearest reason as to why God responds to Job the way He does.

4. From verses 6-14, what challenge is God putting to Job, as Job responds to and tries to understand his current suffering?
5. As you've seen Job's questions about his suffering throughout the book, has he been guilty of what God identifies in verse 8?

THINK: We have the friends who on one hand want to condemn Job and declare God just, but on the other hand we have Job who wants to declare his innocence, leaving him with no other option (it seems) than to condemn God. Is it possible to have two (perhaps seemingly) contradictory truths?

6. From these chapters, how do you think God expects Job to react to his suffering? What has he done right, and where has he erred?
7. If you were Job, how would you have felt with this answer from God after all you'd been through?

This answer isn't quite what Job was expecting, nor hoping for I imagine. But if Job's friends (and Elihu) got anything right, it was that we don't define how can and will act, God does. There are some things which God and God alone can understand, and therefore we need to decide if we will trust Him or reject Him.

8. Do you think that God is asking Job for blind trust? Is there another option?

DISCUSS:

Richard Dawkins³ has said, "Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence."

9. How would you respond to this statement? How does what we know of God throughout history help us to respond?

³ Famous Atheist and Author