

The story of Job just might be the most tragic story in the entire Bible. Job was a man who had been extremely blessed by God. We're told that at one time Job had ten children and that "he possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants," and that he was "the greatest of all the people of the east" (1:3). But in the span of just one day, he lost it all. His flocks and servants were destroyed by raiding parties from the surrounding nations. His children were all killed by a strong storm while together in the oldest brother's home. And if that weren't enough, not long after this Job himself was struck with a terrible disease and ended up with painful sores over every inch of his body. To say that Job suffered would be an understatement.

Through all his suffering, though, Job never lost his faith in God. But he was certainly being tempted to! Time and time again as recorded in Job chapter 3 through Job chapter 37, Job complained to God and questioned God's motives. For thirty-five chapters God is silent. For **35 chapters** God doesn't say a word. For **35 chapters** Job cries out. And for **35 chapters** Job's companions and counselors Bildad, Zophar, Eliphaz, and Elihu have all kinds of strongly worded opinions on what Job has done wrong and what Job needs to do. But God? He says nothing.

Brace yourself. Beginning with Job 38:1 the **hidden** God becomes the **revealed** God and what He reveals is absolutely amazing! What power! What wisdom! And what awesome greatness!

The main take away point from today's text is this: Instead of an explanation from God we receive a revelation of God. God finally speaks. Out of the thunder, God speaks. In the middle of the storm, God speaks. To the father who holds a rose taken from his son's coffin, God speaks. To the wife who holds the flag taken from her husband's casket, God speaks. To the couple with the barren womb and the fervent prayers, God speaks. To any person who has tried to see God while their life is falling apart, He speaks. Our God speaks in the storm and His voice thunders with majesty, power, and authority.

Job 38:1: "Then the Lord [*Yahweh*] answered Job out of the storm." This storm has huge thunder clouds, filled with flashes of lightning going back and forth. It's a massive show of force, a Category 5 kind of storm for a Category 5 kind of God! And for the first time since chapters 1 and 2, the name "Yahweh" appears. From chapter 3 through chapter 37 people have called Him "God" and "the Almighty," but not Yahweh. Why is this important? Note Exodus 3:14 where God says, "I am who I am." Jesus picks this up with His "I am" statements

in John's Gospel. For example, "I am the Bread of Life." "I am the Good Shepherd." And, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

For thirty-five chapters Job is consumed with all kinds of questions. Where is God? Why is this happening? When will this end? How could God do this to me? But the most important question is not when, why, what, or how. It is *who*. Who is the God behind all of this? And *who* is the question that is answered in Job 38–41. **Instead of an explanation from God we receive a revelation of God.**

"Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?" (v.2). Job doesn't respond. "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me" (v.3). Job keeps quiet. "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much" (v.4). "Do you know how its dimensions were determined and who did the surveying? What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone, as the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy?" (vv. 5–7).

The tables are turned. Instead of Job questioning God, now God questions Job. Divine questions pour down like sheets of rain. They splatter in the chambers of Job's heart with a wildness and a beauty and a terror that leaves every Job who has ever lived drenched and amazed and absolutely speechless.

What starts here, and continues to the end of chapter 41, is a list of seventy questions that God asks Job. And the point of it all is this: Job needs to let God be God. There is a God, and we are not Him! To emphasize this point, God repeatedly points out that the universe is vast and infinitely complex! For instance, the diameter of the sun is 109 times larger than the earth. Its volume could contain 1,000,000 earths. This God created the Milky Way, which is just one galaxy, and it alone measures 104,000 light-years across. It contains over 100 billion stars. And according to information from the James Webb Space Telescope there are hundreds of billions of galaxies in the universe!

"Can you see it, Job?" God asks. "Can you rejoice in it all as I do? The morning stars sing for joy because of who I am and what I do—can you rejoice in it too? Can you see how carefully I've put it all together? Can you grasp the immensity of what I've created? Can you be my equal? Can you match my power, my ability to watch over and care for all this? What do you say, Job?"

"Then Job answered the Lord: 'I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more'" (40:3–5). "Then Job replied to the Lord: 'I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted'" (42:1–2).

Job gets it. He has been the water boy telling Karl-Anthony Towns how to dribble a basketball. Job has been the equipment manager telling Justin Jefferson how to catch a football. Job has been the clay, telling the Potter what to do. Job surrenders. He stops pressing for **an explanation from God and instead receives a revelation of God.**

This God not only wraps Himself in a storm, but in the fullness of time He wrapped Himself in a human body. Jesus took on flesh to take us into His arms, heal our hurts, and destroy our darkness. He became a human being to live the life we could not and experience the Father's judgment for our sins, so we need not.

We don't have a God who is distant, far off, or disconnected. We have a God who is with us, a God who speaks in the storm and becomes like us in Christ Jesus. Are you broken? He was broken. Are you hurting? He hurt. Do you cry? He cried.

God is fully present for us and is with us. And one day, in the light of glory, we will look back on the story He has written in our lives and the lives of all His people, and we shall declare, "He has done all things well."

Job's attitude began with a mixture of **self-pity** and **self-assertion**. As his life was devastated by one calamity after another, Job sank into grief. Then, in spite of his wife's advice to curse God and die, he insisted on defending his own innocence. By contrast the attitude recommended by Job's three friends was **self-accusation**. "Come on, Job," they said, "admit that you're suffering because of your sin. This is God's judgment upon you; repent and it will soon turn out alright." But Job refused to be bullied into signing such a false confession. He was innocent. Then the fourth friend, Elihu, appears on the scene and he urges upon Job yet another attitude to adopt, that of **self-discipline**. He pleads with Job to see that there is purpose in pain, not payback but instruction, to recognize that in some measure this is God's way of correcting us. Then finally it is God who speaks, and the only attitude left open to Job is **self-surrender**, falling before God in reverence, awe and humility.

How about us? In our storm? Well, I can give up on God. I can say God is a fake and a phony and a fraud. Or I can receive the revelation and stop insisting on an explanation. Then I surrender, like Job. I declare my declaration of **dependence**. And what does that look like? Jesus gives us the words. "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." I dare to pray these words because a revelation of this God beats any explanation, every time. Amen.