

God Speaks to Job (*The Message*)

Chapter 38

1. And now, finally, GOD answered Job from the eye of a violent storm. He said:
2. "Why do you confuse the issue? Why do you talk without knowing what you're talking about?"
3. Pull yourself together, Job! Up on your feet! Stand tall! I have some questions for you, and I want some straight answers.
4. Where were you when I created the earth? Tell me, since you know so much!
5. Who decided on its size? Certainly you'll know that! Who came up with the blueprints and measurements?
6. How was its foundation poured, and who set the cornerstone,
7. While the morning stars sang in chorus and all the angels shouted praise?
8. And who took charge of the ocean when it gushed forth like a baby from the womb?
9. That was me! I wrapped it in soft clouds, and tucked it in safely at night.
10. Then I made a playpen for it, a strong playpen so it couldn't run loose,
11. And said, 'Stay here, this is your place. Your wild tantrums are confined to this place.'
12. "And have you ever ordered Morning, 'Get up!' told Dawn, 'Get to work!'"
13. So you could seize Earth like a blanket and shake out the wicked like cockroaches?
14. As the sun brings everything to light, brings out all the colors and shapes,
15. The cover of darkness is snatched from the wicked—they're caught in the very act!
16. "Have you ever gotten to the true bottom of things, explored the labyrinthine caves of deep ocean?"
17. Do you know the first thing about death? Do you have one clue regarding death's dark mysteries?
18. And do you have any idea how large this earth is? Speak up if you have even the beginning of an answer.
19. "Do you know where Light comes from and where Darkness lives
20. So you can take them by the hand and lead them home when they get lost?"
21. Why, of course you know that. You've known them all your life, grown up in the same neighborhood with them!
22. "Have you ever traveled to where snow is made, seen the vault where hail is stockpiled,
23. The arsenals of hail and snow that I keep in readiness for times of trouble and battle and war?"
24. Can you find your way to where lightning is launched, or to the place from which the wind blows?"
25. Who do you suppose carves canyons for the downpours of rain, and charts the route of thunderstorms
26. That bring water to unvisited fields, deserts no one ever lays eyes on,
27. Drenching the useless wastelands so they're carpeted with wildflowers and grass?"
28. And who do you think is the father of rain and dew,
29. the mother of ice and frost?"
30. You don't for a minute imagine these marvels of weather just happen, do you?"
31. "Can you catch the eye of the beautiful Pleiades sisters, or distract Orion from his hunt?"
32. Can you get Venus to look your way, or get the Great Bear and her cubs to come out and play?"
33. Do you know the first thing about the sky's constellations and how they affect things on Earth?"
34. "Can you get the attention of the clouds, and commission a shower of rain?"
35. Can you take charge of the lightning bolts and have them report to you for orders?"
36. "Who do you think gave weather-wisdom to the ibis, and storm-savvy to the rooster?"
37. Does anyone know enough to number all the clouds or tip over the rain barrels of heaven
38. When the earth is cracked and dry, the ground baked hard as a brick?"

39. "Can you teach the lioness to stalk her prey and satisfy the appetite of her cubs
40. As they crouch in their den, waiting hungrily in their cave?
41. And who sets out food for the ravens when their young cry to God, fluttering about because they have no food?

Chapter 39

1. "Do you know the month when mountain goats give birth? Have you ever watched a doe bear her fawn?
2. Do you know how many months she is pregnant? Do you know the season of her delivery,
3. when she crouches down and drops her offspring?
4. Her young ones flourish and are soon on their own; they leave and don't come back.
5. "Who do you think set the wild donkey free, opened the corral gates and let him go?
6. I gave him the whole wilderness to roam in, the rolling plains and wide-open places.
7. He laughs at his city cousins, who are harnessed and harried. He's oblivious to the cries of teamsters.
8. He grazes freely through the hills, nibbling anything that's green.
9. "Will the wild buffalo condescend to serve you, volunteer to spend the night in your barn?
10. Can you imagine hitching your plow to a buffalo and getting him to till your fields?
11. He's hugely strong, yes, but could you trust him, would you dare turn the job over to him?
12. You wouldn't for a minute depend on him, would you, to do what you said when you said it?
13. "The ostrich flaps her wings futilely— all those beautiful feathers, but useless!
14. She lays her eggs on the hard ground, leaves them there in the dirt, exposed to the weather,
15. Not caring that they might get stepped on and cracked or trampled by some wild animal.
16. She's negligent with her young, as if they weren't even hers. She cares nothing about anything.
17. She wasn't created very smart, that's for sure, wasn't given her share of good sense.
18. But when she runs, oh, how she runs, laughing, leaving horse and rider in the dust.
19. "Are you the one who gave the horse his prowess and adorned him with a shimmering mane?
20. Did you create him to prance proudly and strike terror with his royal snorts?
21. He paws the ground fiercely, eager and spirited, then charges into the fray.
22. He laughs at danger, fearless, doesn't shy away from the sword.
23. The banging and clanging of quiver and lance don't faze him.
24. He quivers with excitement, and at the trumpet blast races off at a gallop.
25. At the sound of the trumpet he neighs mightily, smelling the excitement of battle from a long way off, catching the rolling thunder of the war cries.
26. "Was it through your know-how that the hawk learned to fly, soaring effortlessly on thermal updrafts?
27. Did you command the eagle's flight, and teach her to build her nest in the heights,
28. Perfectly at home on the high cliff face, invulnerable on pinnacle and crag?
29. From her perch she searches for prey, spies it at a great distance.
30. Her young gorge themselves on carrion; wherever there's a roadkill, you'll see her circling."

Chapter 40

1. GOD then confronted Job directly: "Now what do you have to say for yourself?
2. Are you going to haul me, the Mighty One, into court and press charges?"
3. Job answered:
4. "I'm speechless, in awe—words fail me. I should never have opened my mouth!
5. I've talked too much, way too much. I'm ready to shut up and listen."

6. GOD addressed Job next from the eye of the storm,
7. and this is what he said: “I have some more questions for you, and I want straight answers.
8. “Do you presume to tell me what I’m doing wrong? Are you calling me a sinner so you can be a saint?
9. Do you have an arm like my arm? Can you shout in thunder the way I can?
10. Go ahead, show your stuff. Let’s see what you’re made of, what you can do.
11. Unleash your outrage. Target the arrogant and lay them flat.
12. Target the arrogant and bring them to their knees. Stop the wicked in their tracks—make mincemeat of them!
13. Dig a mass grave and dump them in it— faceless corpses in an unmarked grave.
14. I’ll gladly step aside and hand things over to you— you can surely save yourself with no help from me!
15. “Look at the land beast, Behemoth. I created him as well as you. Grazing on grass, docile as a cow.
16. Just look at the strength of his back, the powerful muscles of his belly.
17. His tail sways like a cedar in the wind; his huge legs are like beech trees.
18. His skeleton is made of steel, every bone in his body hard as steel.
19. Most magnificent of all my creatures, but I still lead him around like a lamb!
20. The grass-covered hills serve him meals, while field mice frolic in his shadow.
21. He takes afternoon naps under shade trees, cools himself in the reedy swamps,
22. Lazily cool in the leafy shadows as the breeze moves through the willows.
23. And when the river rages he doesn’t budge, stolid and unperturbed even when the Jordan goes wild.
24. But you’d never want him for a pet—you’d never be able to housebreak him!”

Chapter 41

1. “Or can you pull in the sea beast, Leviathan, with a fly rod and stuff him in your creel?
2. Can you lasso him with a rope, or snag him with an anchor?
3. Will he beg you over and over for mercy, or flatter you with flowery speech?
4. Will he apply for a job with you to run errands and serve you the rest of your life?
5. Will you play with him as if he were a pet goldfish? Will you make him the mascot of the neighborhood children?
6. Will you put him on display in the market and have shoppers haggle over the price?
7. Could you shoot him full of arrows like a pin cushion, or drive harpoons into his huge head?
8. If you so much as lay a hand on him, you won’t live to tell the story.
9. What hope would you have with such a creature? Why, one look at him would do you in!
10. If you can’t hold your own against his glowering visage, how, then, do you expect to stand up to me?
11. Who could confront me and get by with it? I’m in charge of all this—I run this universe!
12. “But I’ve more to say about Leviathan, the sea beast, his enormous bulk, his beautiful shape.
13. Who would even dream of piercing that tough skin or putting those jaws into bit and bridle?
14. And who would dare knock at the door of his mouth filled with row upon row of fierce teeth?
15. His pride is invincible; nothing can make a dent in that pride.
16. Nothing can get through that proud skin— impervious to weapons and weather,
17. The thickest and toughest of hides, impenetrable!
18. “He snorts and the world lights up with fire, he blinks and the dawn breaks.
19. Comets pour out of his mouth, fireworks arc and branch.
20. Smoke erupts from his nostrils like steam from a boiling pot.
21. He blows and fires blaze; flames of fire stream from his mouth.
22. All muscle he is—sheer and seamless muscle. To meet him is to dance with death.
23. Sinewy and lithe, there’s not a soft spot in his entire body—

24. As tough inside as out, rock-hard, invulnerable.
25. Even angels run for cover when he surfaces, cowering before his tail-thrashing turbulence.
26. Javelins bounce harmlessly off his hide, harpoons ricochet wildly.
27. Iron bars are so much straw to him, bronze weapons beneath notice.
28. Arrows don't even make him blink; bullets make no more impression than raindrops.
29. A battle ax is nothing but a splinter of kindling; he treats a brandished harpoon as a joke.
30. His belly is armor-plated, inexorable—unstoppable as a barge.
31. He roils deep ocean the way you'd boil water, he whips the sea like you'd whip an egg into batter.
32. With a luminous trail stretching out behind him, you might think Ocean had grown a gray beard!
33. There's nothing on this earth quite like him, not an ounce of fear in that creature!
34. He surveys all the high and mighty— king of the ocean, king of the deep!"

Chapter 42

1. Job answered GOD:
2. "I'm convinced: You can do anything and everything. Nothing and no one can upset your plans.
3. You asked, 'Who is this muddying the water, ignorantly confusing the issue, second-guessing my purposes?'
4. I admit it. I was the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, made small talk about wonders way over my head. You told me, 'Listen, and let me do the talking. Let me ask the questions. You give the answers.'
5. I admit I once lived by rumors of you; now I have it all firsthand—from my own eyes and ears!
6. I'm sorry—forgive me. I'll never do that again, I promise! I'll never again live on crusts of hearsay, crumbs of rumor."
7. After GOD had finished addressing Job, he turned to Eliphaz the Temanite and said, "I've had it with you and your two friends. I'm fed up! You haven't been honest either with me or about me—not the way my friend Job has.
8. So here's what you must do. Take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my friend Job. Sacrifice a burnt offering on your own behalf. My friend Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer. He will ask me not to treat you as you deserve for talking nonsense about me, and for not being honest with me, as he has."
9. They did it. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did what GOD commanded. And GOD accepted Job's prayer.