

Where Were You When God Created the Earth?

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[0 : 0 0] to Job chapter 38, you find that on page 443 of your church Bibles. Job chapter 38 and again verse 4.

Where we read, Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Last week marked the 50th anniversary of the first human beings to set foot on the moon, the famous Apollo 11 touchdown on 20th July 1969.

I have to admit I'm actually more than a little interested in that astonishing event and even after 50 years it still grabs my attention. I remember that day in July 1969, I was with my family on holiday at my granny's in Lockerbie and I remember with my uncles and my granny watching the television, very grainy pictures of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin setting foot on the moon and yes, I mean even after 50 years still amazed at that incredible achievement.

And what's fascinating in amongst all the technology of man going to the moon was that the subject of God, God and creation was so prominent in these moon flights and indeed even the earlier Russian ones.

Back in 1961, Yuri Gagarin, Gagarin the first man to journey into outer space, was reported or certainly reputed to have said, while he was in space, that he could see no evidence of God.

[1 : 4 6] In actual fact that was more a Russian propaganda thing. Gagarin never said anything like that but certainly the Russian government wanted to bolster its atheistic state and they put this out that Gagarin said, there is no God.

There were Russian posters of that time with Gagarin in space and a caption in Russian underneath, there is no God. Famous Apollo 8. Three astronauts, they were stuck on the moon, read from Genesis 1.

They read the account of creation. NASA was even sued by American atheists and two years later when Buzz Aldrin was on the moon and he had bread and wine in the act of communion, it was hushed up.

They didn't want to offend the atheists and nothing has changed really in 50 years. Even a few days ago I was reading a well-known satirical magazine and it was commenting on the first landing on the moon and the comment even in that magazine was, well, they saw outer space, they saw the vast distance of space, how can there be a God?

But yet you who affirm by faith the truth of God's Word, you will affirm and do affirm the biblical account of creation, of the origins of the universe and you know by faith and you affirm in your heart that yes, God did create the heavens and the earth and that what you see before you and what's even beyond your seeing in the vastness of the universe, you believe by faith, yes, God did create what has been created.

[3 : 2 6] And in the context of this passage this morning, then, you know, in relation to God being creator as this verse teaches us and gives us, three things we can affirm even from this passage, even this verse, we can affirm God's reality, that God is there, yes, we can affirm God's sovereignty, that God is in control of all things and thirdly, we can affirm God's greatness in relation to man's smallness, man's weakness, man's puniness, man so small in relation to our great God and our maker of heaven and earth.

And so when we see the reality and sovereign power of God, as we see that, yes, demonstrated through creation, then, yes, we can see too the wonder of the grace of God in His great sovereign love for sinners.

That's why we sang Psalm 8. You know, amidst the vastness of creation, Psalm 8 helps us when the words come before us, what is man that you're mindful of him?

What is man that God's so mindful of you that He sent His one and only Son, the one through whom the universe was created, that God so loved the world that He sent His Son to live amongst His creation, to come to save sinners, to give you that sure hope of eternal life, to make you a new creation in the Lord Jesus.

So, as we are here to worship God, to, yes, to worship our Creator, maker of heaven and earth, as we worship the One who is there, then, I believe this passage here helps us and strengthens our faith in the living and true God.

[5 : 20] And, well, as we see where God asks, the main character of this book, Job, where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Now, you can't just jump into a passage.

You can't just do that. You have to see every passage in context. So, we have to obviously work out what's happening here. Why has God made this statement to Job?

Well, you know, the book of Job, in the book of Job we're told of Job being severely tested by God. Job's faith tested in one true sovereign God.

And when we come to this particular section of the book, we know that Job's already been in the throes of suffering for many months. Under the permission of God, Satan had been allowed to torment Job.

And to torment Job with the most severe testings, but not to take Job's life. And in these testings, in that suffering, Job loses his property.

[6 : 23] And tragically of all, he loses his seven sons and three daughters, all killed when a whirlwind destroyed the house that the children were in. And in an instant, Job had lost everything.

And even after his losses, Satan continues to plague him. And Job is plagued with terrible sores all over his body. And even his wife loathes him. She tells him, curse God and die.

But while Job has lost everything, even lost his wife's support and wife's love, he will not curse God for his ills. But then as you go through the chapters, and you follow Job's torment, torment didn't lessen.

And you can detect that Job's confidence in God is starting to shake. Go to chapter 9, verse 11, for example, and Job says, He passes by me. God passes by me.

And I see him not. He moves on, but I don't perceive him. A few verses later, He crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause. A few chapters later, where Job cries out to God, Why do you hide your face and count me as your enemy?

[7 : 37] He's got three friends who try and comfort him. But they make matters worse. Because they're accusing Job. They're accusing him of bringing suffering on himself.

And they're saying, Well, Job, obviously you're suffering because you've renounced God in some way. But that, of course, wasn't the case. So these friends, Job actually at one time called these three friends miserable comforters, speaking windy words, empty words.

So up to chapter 38, the chapter we read, what do we find? Certainly when Job is being plagued with these sufferings, we find that God's voice is silent.

All we read are Job's words and the words of his so-called friends. There are no direct words up to this point, no direct words from God to Job until this point, until we read here the most beautiful, poetic, powerful language that tells us of the truth, that God is there, that God is sovereign, that God is great.

How small man is in comparison. And yet, and yet, despite man's smallness, God's grace towards sinner man abounds.

[8 : 52] We'll see that, I pray, more fully when we start to launch into the passage more fully. So, three things to consider. First of all, the reality of God.

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind. Well, a whirlwind had destroyed the home in which Job's children had been in. And now, God appears to Job in another whirlwind, in the power of another whirlwind.

God has not remained silent. In God's time, in God's perfect time, God has chosen to speak. He's not going to let Job suffer more than Job can endure.

God will restore to Job his possessions and give him a family. But first of all, God will reveal to Job who he is, who God is in all his power and glory.

And there are, I think, several things to notice. Even these first few words of chapter 38. And the first thing is the reality of the presence of God. The truth that God is there and he will not be silent.

[10 : 01] I mean, you see that truth that's revealed in Scripture even at the time of creation. That God is there and will not be silent. And God said, let there be light.

And God said, you go through the chronology of the creation. Each successive day of creation. And then the completed work on the sixth day and then God said, again, the voice of God, let us make man in our own image after our likeness.

God spoke creation into being. God of course, we know God is God in eternity. In the timelessness of pre-creation, God interacted within the Trinity.

God communicating within the three person, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And then in the act of creation, God speaks. God's Word tells us the truth of the reality of the God who's there.

that Word that faith affirms, that the writer to the Hebrews tells us. Hebrews 11, 3, by faith, we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God.

[11 : 15] And of course, God's creative power through His Word, through the Word, God reveals Himself through His Word and continues to do so.

He's speaking to you now through His Word. This is the written Word of truth. I mean, think of the Lord Jesus, the Word of God. Think of Jesus. Through Jesus, the Word of God through whom the heavens and earth were created.

He speaks and continues to speak. Back to the book of Hebrews. Long ago at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets but in these last days He's spoken to us by His Son whom He appointed there of all things through whom also He created the world.

God isn't silent. And whether Job in his months of suffering when he didn't hear the voice of God speak to him or whether you in your days or maybe weeks even months maybe even years of particular suffering these things that God allows you to or permits you to endure in your life God is there.

And you know we have the blessing the great blessing of the full revelation of God's Word to us. And therefore we hear we do hear the voice of the Lord Jesus the voice that He speaks to you you who are tired and weary and burdened what did Jesus say come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

[13 : 02] And the same Lord Jesus who calls the one whom God permits to endure suffering for His name's sake the same Lord Jesus tells you tells us I am with you always even to the end of the age.

So you see when God the Lord answered Job God was revealing His presence to Job and God was revealing His comforting presence I mean the three friends were no comforters but God was giving Job His comfort and doing so even in the whirlwind even in the midst of a storm you know the whirlwind I mean there's various ways you can translate that word that you might know as tornado for example but something that's certainly very very fierce the fierceness of this natural phenomenon that would indicate the power of God God wasn't speaking to Job here in a still small voice that God spoke to Elijah when Carmelus was befitting the situation God was speaking to Job in the fierceness and the ferocity of a tornado and that natural feature speak of God's terrifying holiness that God was revealing His power revealing His greatness that no man can equal it must have been a shocking experience to in one sense anyway for Job to hear God speak through this mighty windstorm this mighty whirlwind you know particularly you know as Job's been suffering as he's been suffering and God speaks through a disturbance of nature because God is alerting Job to Himself

God's bringing Job face to face with the majestic power of God and you know and you all know there are times when God will speak to you through dark and difficult experiences that yes He permits you to endure what did the prophet Nahum say He declared His way God's way is in the whirlwind and the storm and there are those times when yes God steps into your life yes through a demonstration of His great power really just stops you in your tracks yes you're coming face to face as it were with the living true God and your life is never the same again the whirlwind of God's permitted affliction the whirlwind of God permitted circumstances that actually reveal His sovereign power isn't it during these times of God demonstrating

His power His sovereign power that you would do hear His voice speak to you and you do grow in your understanding of who God is and that God is truly in control of your life and when you come to realise that then with Job you yes for a time anyway you remain silent as you listen to God speaking to you through these circumstances and you recognise His power His control over your life and with Job all you can do is utter certainly words of humility that we read in chapter 40 behold I am a small account what shall I answer you but notice but notice also yes God's demonstrating His mighty power but notice even here with Job He's intervening in love in love He's doing so as He does with you yes as a loving Father restoring you to Himself and you see that again in these first few words of chapter 38 then the Lord now you know that when you see the Lord in capital letters that tells you that this is the covenant name of God the name Yahweh we'll just keep using the word Lord but you see it in capital letters in other words the word of God the name of God that tells of

His relationship with His people His eternal relationship with His people His relationship of love His relationship of grace His eternal fellowship with you yes even through the storms even when you sense Him least even when His way with you is in the whirlwind of His mighty power but if you're in Christ by faith you have this assurance that yes the same Lord who spoke to Job in the whirlwind yes speaks to you and speaks to you through His word I know atheistic state is going to prevail in its denial of God I know secular humanistic organization is going to win the victory God is there God is real God is sovereign God is triumphant God speaks through His word He's in the heart of each and every one of His people who know Him Job knew God

[18:06] God addressed Job with words that certainly silence Job because Job was listening to God speak to him and Job was submitting to the God of all power to the God of all grace the sovereign God and that's our next thing we need to really look at here the sovereignty of God where we see in the question in verse 4 where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth tell me if you have understanding in between verse 1 and verse 4 God summoned Job to appear before him and these introductory words of verses I think it's 2 and 3 they're given to prepare Job to prepare Job for what's about to be spoken to Job about God's sovereign power and greatness so Job's going to have to learn from the word of God he's going to have to learn that yes up to this point

Job has been so ignorant in his knowledge of God so what does God do God brings Job to the time of creation itself and God asks Job a question that Job knows the answer to and of course he knows the answer where were you when you created the world of course Job knows he wasn't there and knowing that answer of course he's betraying his own ignorance about the full sovereign purposes of God even in Job's life where was Job where were you when time began he wasn't there but God was there in the beginning God so that direct question that you see in verse 4 that Job is asked to each and every one of us where were you when God created the heavens and the earth you weren't there physically there God was there Father Son and Holy Spirit were there the fullness of the

Godhead was there when the earth was without form and empty and in that question that God asks God asked Job Job's silent Job knows he wasn't there in the beginning and in that silence Job hears that long account that God gives of his creative power and sovereign control over all his creation and God mentions the earth and the sea and light and snow and rain he mentions the stars he mentions mankind he mentions wisdom he mentions the animals he mentions the vast extent of the wonderful truth of God's sovereign power and words given in the most beautiful poetic form as we said two whole chapters we didn't read both chapters but two whole chapters and Job silent throughout why is he silent because he's in awe of God's power and then

God concludes his speech that we saw there in chapter 40 shall a fault finder contend with the almighty he who argues with God let him answer it well as with Job we hear these words we listen to the voice of God and you know with Job whenever we have questioned God's wisdom whenever we have questioned God's sovereign control over our lives what do we do we return to the word of God and what do we see there we see God only wise God only sovereign when we see God only wise and God only sovereign we see our own finiteness we see our own weakness we see that and compare to the God who has and did lay the foundations of the earth we see the God whose wisdom is revealed even in the works of creation and when we see the

God of all power and majesty who are any of us to find fault with God and question his wisdom and I'm very very aware that in your lives yes and in my own life as well there have been providences of God that yes have been and even still are very mysterious difficult even to understand fully when yes maybe at times you have questioned the purposes of God that God has permitted you to endure and you've cried out with the psalmist of Psalm 88 you've put me in the depths of the pit and the regions dark and deep oh Lord why do you cast my soul away why do you hide your face from me but even with as it were that thread width of face you still bow before God and still with Job you can say I'm of little account what shall I answer you because you're coming before the God who made the heavens and the earth

[23 : 16] God who made you the God who makes no mistakes God who is sovereign and does all things well and therefore and I've probably touched on this already but recognizing God's perfect wisdom in all things then we see confirmed the greatness of God compared to the smallness of man where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth see the emphasis see the contrast see the vast difference between the you of Job and the I of God see that chasm of difference that God's expressing here that tells of his greatness opposed to man's smallness and that's got to be a timely reminder to each one of you you know at times when we're tempted to elevate ourselves and minimize God when we're tempted to have small thoughts of

God and even great thoughts of ourselves but the more we continue the more we know God the more that we know God as he's made himself known to us even as he's made himself known in creation then we cannot but bow before him and recognize his greatness and our puniness and so it's for each one of us in humility to come before our great God and Savior and to confess our sins to him and to cry out Lord Lord be merciful to me a sinner be merciful to me who've wronged you so much yes who even doubted your sovereign mercy forgive me Lord for the times I've tried to make you in my image and thought of you not as I ought but as I wished and so we do need to meditate the more on God you know amidst all the distractions of life most important work of a

Christian to draw near to God to seek him to know him and in knowing God to worship him and to serve him and to obey him to know that freedom that's yours in Christ to do his will and to do it with all delight the late 20th century American preacher A.W. Tozer he put it so well get a chance to read him read him put it so well with words with which he'll finish he said this with our loss of the sense of the majesty of God has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine presence we've lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence I pray that we do seek the more to regain that sense of the majesty of God as you meet God in that in that adoring silence and that you do know the reality of the call of God when God speaks to you through his word when you come before him and yes in the psalm we're going to finish with when you cry out when God calls be still and know that I am

God yes it is for you and for me to practice the presence of God in your heart and yes meditate dwell in his sovereign power to think on his greatness contemplate his majesty and his power yes reflect on the chasm that's there between God and you in relation to his majesty and power glory but have that joy to know that he is the covenant God of all grace and that you have that access to the God of all grace the great and majestic God you have access to him through the Lord Jesus Christ through him who came who came to give his life on earth who gives new life to you who are that new creation in the Lord Jesus so give yes give glory to God yes even now in this time of worship praise him affirm in your heart and affirm by your words even affirm by your witness that God is there and that even yes is in your heart if you know him as Lord and Saviour so give him the glory and praise even as he's made himself known in the works of creation even as he's made himself known above all in and through the

Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour our Lord our Redeemer Amen let us pray Lord you speak to us through your word your word of truth may we not have closed our ears to that word may we not have closed our hearts may we not have closed our minds but may we truly have been open to hear you speak to us and may it be Lord that we truly have grown in that knowledge of who you are and that in that growing that we have that firm resolve to live for you to serve you to recognize you in all your glory and to serve you in all humility knowing that your will for each and every one of us is perfect Lord we pray then that you will go before us and that we will trust in you for all things that we will know that you are the one who has made yourself known in creation and that you are making yourself known even in the lives of sinners converted may it even be this day that there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents and may there be that joy in heaven for such that great great event

[29 : 21] Lord hear us as we continue worship with you now hear us as we sing from your word of praise help us then we pray to glorify you be with us then we ask in Jesus name Amen Well let's close in Psalm 46a on page 60 and we'll sing from verse 8 down to verse 11 come see the works the Lord has done the judgments he commands the desolation he has brought to pass in many lands and every land throughout the earth he makes all conflict cease he shatters bow and spear and shield and brings his reign of peace be still and know that I am God on earth exalted high and so on 8 to live in Psalm 46a to God's praise you take you

I have Harmon know God's clean and you feel though Bureau have humility of ether and goodbye to you might well of Martinez