

Where Were You When the World Was Made?

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Job chapter 38, I'm going to read the first speech of Yahweh, Job 38 through 40, so please look there with me, God's holy word.

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Dress for action like a man, I will question you and you make it known to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know. Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk?

[1 : 00] And who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst from the wound?

When I made clouds, its garment and thick darkness, its swaddling band? And prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors and said, Thus far shall you come and no farther.

And here shall your proud ways be stayed. Have you commanded the morning since your days began? Or caused the dawn to know its place?

That it might take hold of the skirts of the earth and the wicked be shaken out of it? It is changed like clay under the seal and its features stand out like a garment.

From the wicked their light is withheld and their uplifted arm is broken. Have you entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you?

[2 : 05] Or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare if you know all this. Where is the way to the dwelling of light?

And where is the place of darkness? That you may take it to its territory. That you may discern the path to its home. You know for you were born then.

And the number of your days is great. Have you entered the storehouses of snow? Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail? Which I reserve for the time of trouble.

For the day of battle and war. Where is the way to the place where the light is distributed? And where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?

Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain? And a way for the thunderbolt. To bring rain on the land where no man is. On the desert where there is no man.

[3 : 03] To satisfy the waste and desolate land. And make the ground sprout with grass. Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew?

From whose womb did the ice come forth? Or who has given birth to the frost of heaven? The waters became hard like stone. And the face of the deep is frozen.

Can you bind the chains of Pleiades? Or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Maseroth in their season? Can you guide the bear with its children?

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds that a flood of waters may cover you?

Can you send forth lightnings that they may go and say to you, Here we are! Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?

[4 : 02] Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the water skins of the heavens when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together?

Can you hunt the prey of the lion? Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket?

Who provides for the raven its prey when its young ones cry to God for help and wonder about for lack of food? Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?

Do you observe the calving of their does? Can you number the months that they fulfill? And do you know the time which they gave birth? When they crouch, bring forth their offspring, and are delivered of their young?

Their young ones become strong. They grow up in the open. They go out and do not return to them. Who has let the wild donkey go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift donkey to whom I have given the arid plain for his home and the sought land for his dwelling place?

[5 : 10] He scorns the tumult of the city. He hears not the shout of the driver. He ranges the mountains as his pasture and searches after every green thing.

Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will he spend the night at your manger? Can you bind him in the furrow with ropes? Or will he harrow the valleys after you?

Will you depend on him because his strength is great? And will you leave to him your labor? Do you have faith in him that he will return your grain and gather it from your threshing floors?

The wings of the ostrich wave proudly. But are they the pinions and plumage of love? For she leaves her eggs to the earth and lets them be warmed on the ground, forgetting that a foot may crush them and that the wild beasts may trample them.

She deals cruelly with her young as if they are not hers. Though her labor be in vain, yet she has no fear. Because God has made her forget wisdom and given her no share of understanding.

[6 : 19] When she rouses herself to flee, she laughs at the horse and the rider. Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane?

Do you make him leap like a locust? His majestic snorting is terrifying. He paws in the valley and exults in his strength. He goes out to meet the weapons.

He laughs at fear and is not dismayed. He does not turn back from the sword. Upon him rattle the quiver, the flashing spear and the javelin. With fierceness and rage, he swallows the ground.

He cannot stand still at the sight of the trumpet. When the trumpet sounds, he says, Aha! He smells the battle from afar, the thunder of captains. And the shouting.

Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars and spreads his wing toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high?

[7 : 16] On the rock he dwells and makes his home. On the rocky crag and stronghold. From there he spies out the prey.

His eyes behold it from far away. His young ones suck up blood. And where the slain are, there is he. And the Lord said to Job, Shall a fault finder contend with the Almighty?

He who argues with God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am of small account.

And what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once and I will not answer twice. But I will proceed no further.

This is the word of the Lord. Life is unfair. And that's a problem.

[8 : 17] All of us are born with an unfairness radar wired to go off at the slightest slight. You don't have to cultivate that in your young child.

It's there, you know. It may be something as simple as cutting in line. Or learning that a roommate has eaten all your food. When I was in college, a full-on brawl broke out.

Because one roommate ate some of the other roommate's Kraft macaroni and cheese. You know, it's like 30 cents a box. But the slights are more serious.

It's unfair when a 34-year-old man dies of cancer, leaving behind a wife and kids. It's not right for a mother to bury her child. Unjust when a wonderful person lives their whole life alone.

Not to mention the unfairness of hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes seemingly upending lives at random. And the deaths of communism and totalitarian regimes perpetrated on people who did not choose where they were born.

[9 : 28] Why were you born here? Life is unfair. It's a problem. You know, many times we dodge the subject. We comfort the grieving widow. But we mostly look the other way, lest the unfairness of life strike us.

The unfairness of life has been tearing Job at the seams for what we believe to be months now. Again and again, Job has said he's done nothing to deserve what has happened to him. It's all unfair. It's all unjust. It's not right. He's repeatedly appealed to God to make things right. God, if you are the God overall, set all things right.

Set the record straight. Tell everyone he's done nothing wrong. In many ways, Job has wrestled throughout this book with the age-old question, If God is powerful and God is good.

How in the world is all this such a mess? How is life such a mess? But God is silent.

[10 : 33] Not only is he unfair, it seems he doesn't even care. Finally, after all Job's protests and all his friends' attacks, God speaks up.

And what a speech it is. Some of those wonderful verses in all of Scripture are right there. That's why I wanted you to hear the whole thing. We don't normally read that many verses if you're visiting this Sunday.

But I wanted you to hear the whole thing out loud to let this hang on you. But God does not speak in a way that Job and his friends expected. God does not bring down judgment on Job as his friends assumed he would do.

Nor does God tell him why it all happened. You should imagine God saying, Okay, Job, I've been dying to tell you. I've been dying to tell you this is why it all happened. He doesn't do that. He doesn't fill in the gaps.

He doesn't answer his question. He doesn't solve the riddle. Instead, God takes Job by the hand to see the world that he has made. That he rules with power and goodness, wisdom and justice.

[11 : 45] In so doing, God is showing us what we really need in inexplicable suffering. We think what we need is an explanation. Tell me why.

I want to know why is all this going on in my life. What has happened? What's gone off the rails that this has come about? So we think we need an explanation. Or we need a vindication.

We need somebody to speak up for us. To tell everyone that we're not this lousy person that's brought all this to pass. But what God gives Job and what he gives us in suffering is so much better. He gives us himself. In a word, where we're going is, Behold our God and before him bow, know his perfect plan prevails in all the earth.

Behold our God and before him bow, know his perfect plan prevails in all the earth. We're going to look at this in three points. Just kind of headings. The first is the king. The king.

[12 : 41] Who is speaking? Who is the king? Who's the ruler over all? Now verse 1 introduces the Lord with no build up, no fanfare, no cronies ushering in.

The Lord is introduced just like every other speaker. Look at verse 38. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind. Now again and again, Job has been asking God to speak.

He's been asking God to answer him. And strikingly, in the last speech, Job said in Job 31, 35, which we have for you, he says, Oh, that I had one to hear me.

Here is my signature. Let the Almighty answer me. And now the Lord answers. Now we must remember the Lord owes no one anything.

He owes no one any explanation, any answer, any filling in the gap. But the Lord draws near and the Lord speaks to Job.

[13 : 43] There's several things that stand out immediately. Firstly is the Lord speaks. You see that most likely in your English translation if you have it before you. It's L-O-R-D, all caps.

The translators are alerting you that in the original language, that is not merely Lord, just generic God who rules or is a king, a ruler in the earth. But L-O-R-D, Lord, the covenant name of God, Yahweh.

Hebrew writers wouldn't even write out the words, but instead use an abbreviation, Y-H-W-A. So he's saying, Yahweh is speaking now, the Lord who reigns over all.

Now the word Yahweh has not appeared since chapter 2. So it repeatedly occurs in chapters 1 and 2 of the book of Job. And it reappears here as if to say, whatever those guys were saying about me, I've come to set the record straight.

Many talk about God. Even the demons believe and shudder about Him. But He speaks to set the record straight.

[14 : 58] So stunningly, Yahweh speaks. The Lord speaks directly. There's no prophet between Job and the Lord right here. There's no mediator, no go-between.

The Lord is speaking directly to one man. This is a personal speech. We're listening in. We've got a lot to learn. But this is a personal speech to Job.

It's stunning, if you think about it. In the whole of the Old Testament, Scripture is a stunning speech that just jumps out of the page. But the last thing that stands out is the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.

What does that mean? Now when the Lord spoke to Moses on the mountain, there was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud and a trumpet. But this reference is not to the awesome presence of God.

Whirlwind here is a category 5 hurricane that rips apart communities in a moment. What's he saying? What's he saying? The Lord is saying, or right there, he's saying, I'm not going to kick the can, Job.

[16:05] I'm speaking to you not about when everything's going well and the sun's shining high and life's going great. I'm speaking to you from the storm. I'm speaking to you from the wreckage.

Now Job, imagine that he would speak first, that he would state his case. We've told you that this is kind of legalese runs through the book of Job because Job wants to defend his case.

He wants witnesses. He wants to present it to the Lord, but the Lord says that's not the way it's going to go down. Look at verse 2. He says, who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge, dressed for action like a man?

I will question you and you will make it known to me. Counsel is a word meaning decision, strategy, or plan.

So the counsel of the Lord refers to the decisions and plans that he has established for the earth. The counsel of the Lord reigns over the earth.

[17:14] What he has planned, what he has decided is what takes place. And so the Lord says, Job, you've been darkening my counsel. Now what's that mean? You've been telling lies about my counsel.

You've been undermining my counsel. You've been undermining my counsel. You've been attacking my counsel. Now Job was right when he repeatedly maintained his innocence.

And we saw that again and again. He defended himself, declared that he had no sins, but he was wrong. When he said God doesn't know what he's doing.

That's how he darkened counsel. He didn't just attack his friends. He began to attack God. As Taylor, or Gil reminded me, I can't remember. Somebody reminded us last week, or the week before.

You know, Job did not suffer because of his sin, but in his suffering he did sin. And this is the main way. He attacked God and said, you're not running the world well. And so the Lord says, dress for action.

[18:25] Gird up your loins is a literal translation. What are you saying? Tuck in the shirt. Tie your shoes because it's about to go down. Prepare for combat. Now, is the Lord angry with Job?

Is he annoyed? I try to restrain myself, but I think you read these verses, and you kind of get a little annoyance in your voice. Where were you?

Kind of like a parent talking to a teenager. I brought you into this world. Is he offended? I don't think so.

I want to just say two things. Just before we dive into this, just to set it. You know, it's important to see that Job, the Lord is asking questions, not giving answers.

Everyone knows it's easier to answer a probing question than respond to a blunt statement around your house. Maybe this happens around ours. It might happen around yours. You might say, you're angry.

[19:24] It's obvious by your clenched fist and the, you know, the throbbing veins on your forehead. You're angry. You're angry. It's a lot harder to respond to that than someone says, you seem a little upset.

Got something stuck in your craw? I mean, are you upset in some way? The wise don't lecture if they really want to help someone.

They ask questions. And the Lord is showing himself to be the truly wise counselor. Imagine how different it would be if the Lord came out with statements and said, you weren't there when I laid the foundation of the earth.

You didn't see me shut in the sea. You haven't watched me command the sun every morning. He's asking questions for a reason. He's drawing Job out.

Now, while all the questions reveal gaps in Job's knowledge, he doesn't know all the things he thinks he knows. All of the questions point back to what God knows. And that's really important too. [20 : 31] He doesn't ask, what are the dimensions of the earth? He said, who determined the dimensions of the earth? Why? Because even as he's leading Job to see how much he does not know about it, all the things he thought he knew about, he's pointing him to him who knows.

He's drawing Job out. He's not trying to win an argument. He's trying to win Job to himself. So let's dive into the speech, the king's speech.

Point two, the king's speech. The Lord answers Job with a list of questions, taking him in many ways as a tour of the world.

He begins first with the physical creation, the foundation of the earth that moves to the animal world. Perhaps we're to read these verses like a praise hymn of creation, like Psalm 8 or 19, 148 or Isaiah 40.

But these are more than a, what's typical in the Old Testament. They're more than a typical hymn of creation. They include the usual suspects, sun, moon, and stars, but they include some of the wild things.

[21 : 40] And that's important. The sea, the snow and hail, thunderbolts and lightnings, hymns of creation often leave us marveling at God's power and wisdom and might.

But these verses are meant to lead us to think about something more than that. I want to sum it up. So this king's speech, we could sum it up in three little headings that I put together in a run-on sentence.

God's power is over all the world. God's goodness is throughout the world. While evil remains in the world, it is under God's rule. God's power is over all the world.

God's goodness is throughout the world. While evil remains in the world, it is under God's rule.

That's what the Lord is reminding Job of in these verses. Firstly, God's power is over the world.

Now the Lord begins where we might expect at the beginning of creation. Look down at verse 4. He said, where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding.

[22 : 41] Who determined its measurements? Surely you know. Or who stretched the line upon it? He's likening himself to the ultimate architect who designed and built all creation.

He laid it down in gradual stages. He laid the foundation. He measured the footers. He laid the rebar. He poured the concrete. He set the cornerstone.

He is the one who established the foundation of the earth. And the foundation of the earth and the world shall not be moved, as the psalmist says.

But he was not alone. Look in verse 7. It says, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. The angels shouted for joy. Glory to God in the highest at the coming of Jesus Christ.

Well, they shouted here too. The morning stars added their voice.

[23 : 49] The sea burst onto the scene right after this. Look at verse 8. Or who shut in the sea with doors when it bursts out from the womb? Nothing is more powerful or more terrifying than the sea.

But the Lord rules over it. The Lord governs even the sea. He says, great God who has no equal, who said thus far.

Look at that verse 11. Thus far shall you come and no further. Here shall your proud waves be stayed. No wonder the disciples were filled with great fear when Jesus Christ calmed the waves. Why? Because they realized this was the Lord. Because no one calms the waves. But he doesn't just command the sea.

He commands the sun each day. Look at verse 12. Have you commanded the morning since your days began? There's this emphasis upon the beginning of things. The beginning of creation. The beginning of life.

[24 : 49] You see that throughout this. The life cycle is completely, continually reiterated in this. Have you commanded the morning since your days began? Or caused the dawn to know its place?

The sun is in the sky to rule over the day. Genesis 1 tells us. Overshadowing everything with light. A massive star. 93 million miles away.

This band called They Might Be Giants used to have a song about the sun. I don't know about the rest of their songs. But that's one you could listen to. Big enough to contain a million earths inside it.

And yet God put it there. The Lord continues and speaks of his power. Not just in the things that are seen.

But in the things that are unseen. He takes us through the gates of death. The deep darkness. The places from where light and darkness come. He takes us into the storehouses of heaven.

[25 : 50] You wonder what are in the storehouses of heaven. Look down in verse 22. Have you entered the storehouses of the snow? Or seen the storehouses of the hail? We might store up grain or wheat or corn or something like that.

The Lord. Warehouse number one. Snow. Warehouse number two. Hail. All these things. What's that meaning?

You know. It's a metaphor. But it's a way of saying God is in control of all of these things. He continues and says, So too the stars and the sky.

We saw that. The heavens. That he reigns over. The ice and the rain. The thunder and the lightning. Look in verse 35 or 38. He says, Can you send forth the lightnings that they may go and say to you, Here we are.

So what he's saying? Report to me, lightning. And I'll decide where you go. Does the lightning come to you, Job? And say, Here am I. Send me. Send me. No.

[26 : 54] The Lord. He's saying, I rule over all the world. All you can see. And so much more that you cannot see. And one of the many things that the Lord is doing in this speech is lifting Job's vantage point.

He shrunk his understanding of God to his world. And we do the same thing. His power, though, is not just displayed in the physical creation.

It's also displayed in the animal creation. He continues with rapid fire. The lion, which wrecks terror in the animal kingdom, waits for the Lord, for him to bring his daily meal.

The mountain goats are brought forth by his command. The wild donkey is not so wild after all, for it's bound and set free by the Lord. The wild ox, this massive six-foot, two-horned creature, does not go where it wants to go.

It serves the Lord. Look at 39.9. And he says, is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will he spend the night at your manger?

[27 : 56] Away in the manger, the little wild ox lay at the command of the Lord. It's amazing.

That's not all. The ostrich. We had two references to the ostrich today, which is fascinating. The war horse, the hawk, and the eagle. Surely Job must have thought, Lord, I understand the sun, moon, and stars.

I understand how you rain all these things. But what are we doing at the zoo? Like, I mean, how is this helping with the silence? You know, how is this helping with the problem?

Look in verse 26 to 27. He says, is it by your understanding that the hawk soars or spreads his wing? Or at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest?

Why is the Lord proclaiming to Job that his power is over all the world? Why? Why? In many ways, the Lord's only reminding Job of what he should already know, which is often what we need as well.

[29 : 06] Because Job has done what we often do when we suffer. When trouble strikes, we move out from our lives and assume that we know better for the world than God does.

We assume that we're not in a well-run world. We assume that there's no plan. There must be no plan. Again, only chaos. King Alfonso X, the king of Spain, once said, had I been present at the creation, I would have given some helpful hints for a better ordering of the universe.

Now, we might not be so bold to say that, but we do the same thing. Lord, Lord, is this really the plan?

For his chaos taking over. Notice the emphasis through this. You know, you could preach five sermons on this, so bear with me.

The emphasis on what Job knows. He says, knows, knows, knows, knows. The Lord is showing Job that the creation that he has made is brimming with life.

[30 : 22] Brimming with joy. The Lord is saying, essentially, the Lord is saying, Job, did you really know what you were talking about when you said you knew better than me?

Behold our God. Before him bow, his perfect plan prevails. He continues after God's powers over all the world.

He underlines how God's goodness is throughout the world. Throughout the world, God, the Lord is not just doing what is right. The Lord is doing what is good. Sometimes we often think that it's just

down to what's right, or he's just showing us that it's in power, but the Lord is good.

At the conclusion of each day at the beginning of creation, the Lord said, it is good. Surely the morning stars sing and the angels shout, not because creation is right or wise or even beautiful, but because it's good.

It's unexpectedly good. Who could have imagined what the Lord has done? And so his goodness is on display. The rule of God over all that he has made is not micromanaging or controlling.

[31 : 29] It's not domineering. It's not a little petty boss who points out your every mistake. It's a God who displays his goodness and freeing his creatures to enjoy the world that he has made.

There's a striking emphasis on binding and loosing through this speech, not the binding and loosing of the charismatic, but the binding and loosing of something else.

Look in verse 38, 31. Can you bind the chains of Pleiades? That's a star, a constellation, or loose the cords of Orion. It's the Lord who's doing these things.

He binds Pleiades. He tells him where to go. He loosens Orion. Loosens his belt. He loosens the wild donkey. He binds the wild ox.

Everything and everyone is under the rule of God, and it is good. Submitting yourself to the Lord and His word is not the end of your freedom.

[32 : 27] It's the beginning of it. That's the way the world runs. That's the way he's presenting it to Job, who's tempted to think God doesn't know what he's doing.

God's left me out, hanging to dry. God's goodness is throughout the earth, even places where no one lives. I love how he points this out, 38, 25 through 27.

He says, Who is cleft to channel for the torrents of rain or a way for the thunderbolt to bring rain on a place where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man?

The Lord is saying, I'm not only good to everyone on the face of the earth, I'm good to places where none of those men are. Reminds me of Jonah, when the Lord says he cares about the cattle, and Nineveh as well.

The Lord cares about all that he's made, and he's good to it. The Lord causes rain there. Not only that, but the Lord's goodness is not limited to the nice, playful creatures.

[33 : 24] This trip to the zoo is not just the monkeys who jump around, or something like that, or the giraffes, or something like that. He provides for the lion and the raven. He satisfies their needs.

Look in 38, 41. He says, Who provides for the raven? It's prey when its young ones cry to God for help, or wonder about for lack of food.

So the Lord's out here providing. He knows where the wild things are, and he chases them down to do good to them, to bless them, to provide for them. The wild donkey and the wild ox.

The Lord even creates and rejoices over absurd creatures. Absurd in the old sense. Meaningless type of creatures.

Seem to contribute no value type of creature. That's where the ostrich enters. Look in 39, 13. He says, The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, but are they the pinions and plumage of love?

[34 : 27] The ostrich have beautiful wings, but it cannot fly. It's a bird. It can't fly.

What in the world, Lord, were you thinking when you made a bird that cannot fly? It can run fast. I like how it points that out.

She rouses herself to flee. Verse 18. But it's a bird. Can't fly. Even more than that, she leaves behind her young and forgets they're her young.

Leaving them and exposing them to danger. She is a thoroughly dumb creature. Yet the Lord made her. Francis Anderson, one of the old commentators, said, From the sublime, that means the beautiful and wonderful, to the ridiculous, it is hard to argue that this hilarious sketch of the ostrich serves any solemn didactic purpose.

So any important, strong purpose in teaching us something. It is what it is. A silly bird. Because God made it so. Why?

[35 : 46] This comical account suggests that amid the profusion of creatures, some were made to be useful to me, and some are there just for God's entertainment and ours.

He's underlined something so wonderful. God is good. God does good just for the joy of it.

Sometimes we have such a wrong notion about God that he's this killjoy looking to stop anyone from having a good time.

That's not the way he made. That's not the way his rule is. Why is the Lord underlining his goodness? Because Job has forgotten that God is good.

You know, the friends say God helps those who help themselves. Many people believe that is a verse in the Bible. It's not. It's an anti-gospel. God is good to those who work hard, they say, who do the right things.

That's what most Christians believe. Do good, get good. You know, as the song says, nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could. So somewhere in my childhood, I must have done something.

[36 : 59] But it's wrong. And Job says, he's a contrast. He says, that's bunk. God is not even good to those who work hard and do good, who do the right things. I did all the good things and look what happened to me.

Yeah, do good, you might lose it all. But the Lord is saying, my goodness is throughout the world and you just don't have it pinned down. Even deeper, the Lord is saying to Job, though you may not see it, if I care so, this is a word for you, you may not see it, if I care so meticulously for the lions and the ravens, then surely I care more conscientiously for you.

It's an argument from the lesser to the greater. What did God say at creation? He said all the creation was good. What did he say on the sixth day? It is very good.

What's the crown of his creation? Not the things he made. Those things will pass away. But the people that he formed in his image. So if God cares about all this, making sure the ravens, babies get food, then you can be assured he cares for you.

And so if you're experiencing something that is not good, then you must know God has good reasons. You must know it.

[38 : 30] Behold the Lord before him bowed. Know his perfect plan prevails in all the earth. Finally, the Lord reminds Job about evil. God's power is over all the world.

God's goodness is throughout the world. While evil remains in the world, it is under God's rule. I love this speech. There's so many things here. The Lord does not turn a blind eye to the evil that fills the earth.

He doesn't just say, I rule over everything and I am wise. He addresses the elephant of the room. He does not do what the south does, which is sweep the skeletons into the closet or underneath the rug.

The fact is, Mother Nature is beautiful, but Mother Nature is a killer. Mother Nature kills, steals, and destroys.

Tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes crush. The sea devours, the storms destroy, the nights conceal, the works of darkness. Terrifying creatures roam the earth, seeking and consuming their prey.

[39 : 38] The war horse charges in the battle. The speech ends ominously on this note. I think to say to Job, I'm not dodging your question. He's saying, I'm talking about justice.

I'm talking about what's going on in the world. Look at the way it ends. He says, On the rock, the eagle dwells. Look in verse 28 to 39. On the rock, he dwells and makes his home.

On the rocky crag and stronghold, from there he spies out the prey. His eyes behold it from far away. His young ones suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is he.

What is the picture? This speech has been all about life in so many ways, but it ends in death.

Why? The Lord is saying, I'm not dodging what you're talking about, Job.

I know that evil is throughout the world, but what he is saying, what he's underlining is that darkness has not overcome the light. Again and again, he tells Job that even evil is under his rule.

[40 : 40] Nowhere is this more evident than how he talks about the sea and the sun. You know, in ancient times, the sea was an unpredictable, uncontrollable force. Who could stop its waves?

Who could control it? Without the aid of radar and forecast, storms were difficult to avoid and claimed many lives. One of my favorite authors, John Flavel, he pastored on the British coast in the 1700s.

He used to say his men, the men of his church, his men, were one board foot away from eternity. Why? The sea was so uncontrollable. Even the apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy, many have made shipwreck of their lives.

It's a vivid metaphor because everybody knows someone who has lost its sea. The sea symbolizes relentless chaos, but look at how it's described in chapter 38, verses 8 through 3.

He says, who shut in the sea with its doors when it burst from the womb, when I made clouds, its garment, in thick darkness, its swaddling band. The sea is likened to a baby that comes out creating

chaos.

[41 : 56] Now there's some babies in the room or you might have a baby that came out creating chaos in your life and the Lord is likened to a father that just swaddles the baby, takes the clouds and swaddles this uncontrollable force.

What's he saying? That was on cue, you know, it's just wonderful. What's he saying? The Lord puts limits to the ocean.

The Lord prescribes its bars. The Lord is not confounded by the evil of this world, Job. The evil of this world is confounded by the Lord.

The Lord restricts where evil can go. The Lord binds and looses evil, lets it loose where he wants. It is under his rule. It's such a provocative verse for what it's saying.

So too with the sun. I love this. Look at the sun in verse 12. He says, Have you commanded the morning since your days began and caused the sun to know its face that he might take hold of the skirts of the earth and the wicked be shaken out of it?

[43 : 07] I imagine a tablecloth back in the summer with the crumbs all over. You take it out and shake it out over the porch railing or something like that. He's saying the sun kind of does that too because in the darkness of night that's when bad things happen and the sun raises to put a limit to the darkness.

Do you see? Evil does not run wild and loose in this world. Evil is under the Lord's sway. It's under His rule. He shakes it out.

He's hedged it in. You know, I think that what the Lord's doing here with Job is if you remember right at the beginning of the book the Lord said I can't tempt Job because you put this hedge of protection around him and that's where we got our little phrase.

But He said I can't attack him. I can't tempt him because he has a hedge of protection around him and then after the Lord took everything he had or Satan took everything he had and all whom he loved He said there's a hedge around me.

I'm hedged in by evil but what the Lord's saying here is the truth is the opposite. Job is not surrounded by evil. Evil is surrounded by God. Evil is only allowed to do what God permits.

[44 : 20] God had a plan all along and though He doesn't tell Job everything right here Job He's telling Job He's leading Job helping Job to understand that God was at work in all this.

God was doing something. Behold the Lord before Him bow. The Lord rests His case after all that and He says shall I find or contend with the Almighty who argues with Him let Him answer Him. And the Lord and the servant responds. In verse 4 Job says I am of small account what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth I've spoken once and I will not answer twice but I will proceed no further.

He does two things immediately. First He makes a confession I am of small account He's essentially saying you are God and I'm not and I'm going to stop playing like He makes a commitment that aligns with that confession I lay my hand on my mouth what is that? the visual of what He plans to do I will shut my big fat mouth now. I've spoken once I've spoken twice that's a way of saying I've spoken again and again and again but now I'm going to stop speaking.

[45 : 45] And what did Job learn? He's learned what did he learn from all this? One thing he learned is that God is not angry with him.

But you know the questions the Lord was drawing Job out but one thing the Lord never said is He never said Job you sinned. He never once confronted Job for sin.

The one thing all Job's friends thought he was going to do the Lord didn't do. But he also didn't learn why it all happened. The Lord didn't say hey Job I've been dying to tell you.

this didn't happen because you're such a rotten guy this happened because you're such a great guy this didn't happen because I don't love you this happened because I do he doesn't say that so what did he learn?

He learned that he could trust God even in the dark The Lord has more to say to Job but this is the first thing we must learn he must learn God's power is over all the earth God's goodness is throughout the earth while evil remains is under his sway what's he saying?

[47 : 02] He's defending him I am the trustworthy God There's two ways you can live this life try to control everything or you can turn everything over to his control Elizabeth Elliot I think she's one of my heroes in the faith whose husband was speared of the Aka Indians in Ecuador went on to bury

four husbands I think she describes what I think Job experienced you know Job wanted a why he wanted to know why it all happened but God outlined a who Elizabeth says it was my first experience she's talking about an unexpected loss of all this work that she had done in translation in Ecuador before arriving to where she was with the Aka Indians washed away she says it was my first experience of having to bow down before that which

I could not possibly explain usually we need not bow We can simply ignore the unexplainable because we have other things to occupy our minds that's what I've said you know sometimes you don't read Job until you have to because there's seasons of your life where you can ignore Job and the inexplicable We sweep it under the rug we evade the questions faith's most severe test come not when we see nothing but when we see a stunning array of evidence that seems to prove our faith vain if God were God if he were omnipotent that means all powerful as he's been declared to be in these verses if he had cared would this have happened one turns in disbelief again from the circumstances and looks into the abyss and if you know you know what the abyss looks like but in the abyss there's only blackness no glimmer of light no answering echo she says it was a long time before I came to the realization that it is in our acceptance of what is given that God gives himself that truth will change your life so behold our God before him bow know his perfect plan prevails in all the earth life is unfair it's a problem but grace is also unfair it's hard you know this book of Job just continually seems to be driving me back to Jesus Christ the real injustice of the earth is not that sinners get bad things the real injustice is that the sinless one receive the punishment for all the bad things

I've done the late R.C. Sproul famously said why do bad things happen to good people that only happen once and he volunteered like only R.C. can that's the truth of the gospel God made him who knew no sin to become sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree to bring us to God the righteous for the unrighteous the guiltless for the guilty the condemned for the innocent that's what he's done you know I think in many ways the Lord takes Job on a tour through creation to see that there is still power that rules over all I rule over all he says there's still goodness yes there's still evil but it's under my sway and I think we don't see the power the goodness and the evil of God under the rule of God more clearly than in the cross of Jesus Christ in so many ways as we wrestle in this world when evil strikes the Lord is calling us again and again to look to the cross where we saw the sun in full array where we saw all these things may God help us

Father in heaven we cast ourselves onto you we ask for grace and help to rest in you in Jesus name Amen you've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com of the Holocaust of the Holocaust of the Holocaust of the Holocaust of Holocaust of Holocaust of Holocaust! desde Holocaust! desde