

OUR QUESTIONS: SESSION THREE

A Study of the Book of Job

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we, Your unworthy servants, give You humble and hearty thanks for all the goodness and loving-kindness that You bestow on us. We praise You for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life. But above all, we bless You for Your boundless love in the redemption of the world by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Study

Read Job 38 (and Job 39 if time allows).

1. God reminds Job of His absolute power and majesty, and of all the things He has done and continues to do in the world. What are some of the things God reminds Job that He controls in the world?

The Lord laid the earth's foundation. He commands the sea and controls the days. He commands and causes the morning. Think about that last statement. We quantify morning according to time, not being fully able to define exactly what it is. And yet the Lord commands it.

Read this illustration:

Theologian Charles Hodge once wrote about his early years at Princeton, "It was my privilege to be the pupil-assistant of Professor Joseph Henry, the illustrious scientist. When, for the first time, electric signals were sent from point to point, the earth itself being used for the return current, Professor Henry put me at one end of the circuit, while he stood directing the experiments at the other. I can well remember the wonderful care with which he arranged them. Very often, when the testing moment came, he would raise his hand in adoring reverence and call upon me to uncover my head and worship in silence. He would say, 'Because God is here, I am about to ask Him a question.'"

2. Do we modern people ever ponder things in a purely scientific manner and forget God's power behind them all?

This is certainly a problem for us. Because we can explain so much about how things work in God's creation, it is almost as if we explain it away. We seem to have lost our awe and respect for what God has made and how He works in it.

Read Job 40.

3. Job promises silence after God's rebuke in chapters 38–39, but do we get any clear indication that he has truly repented of the words he has spoken against God?

In chapter 40, Job has been stopped in His tracks. However, to repent means to turn or turn back. Job only says here that he will be quiet and proceed no further.

4. God also declares His greatness by describing the greatness of one of the creatures He made. What name is given to this creature and what type of a creature does it sound like to you?

In Job 40:15, the Lord mentions Behemoth. While we don't know for sure, it sounds like the Lord is describing a dinosaur. It should be noted here that while Job is in the middle of the books of the Old Testament, the date for it is probably around 2000 B.C. (around or even before the time of Abraham in Genesis).

5. What is the point of God's boasting (Job 40:7–8)?

The Lord boasts to keep Job from trying to judge Him. The Lord declares all of these things in order to get Job's attention and call Job to trust in Him and in His ways.

Read Job 42.

6. In Job 42, Job finally repents, after refusing to do so at the encouragement of his friends. What has he learned that causes such repentance (Job 42:1–3)?

Job has been reminded of the greatness of the Lord, and that no purpose of the Lord can be thwarted. Job has also gained an appreciation for the fact that some things are beyond his understanding. Again, this is important for all of us to remember, especially when it comes to a discussion about why things happen (like the common conversation about suffering). Remember, though, that God has done something about suffering, which we will closely consider in our next session.

7. Job says that when he speaks now, he will be asking for instruction. He will listen more than speak. How can we take this same humble attitude before God (Job 42:4–6)?

We listen more when we read and study God's Word, when we go to church and when we seek the counsel of our pastor or a wise Christian friend. We must do this in the conversation about why suffering exists; however, this is important to do regarding all things. In our current environment, it is vital that we ask the Lord for answers and listen to what He says. There are many voices claiming to have truth. Often, these voices are wrong and misguided. That is why we must be diligent in listening to the Lord's Word and Truth.

8. What role is Job given once he has repented (Job 42:7–9)?

Job is called upon to pray for His friends for the falsehoods they have spoken and their sinful thinking. The Lord graciously listens to Job's prayer. Here we are reminded that we, too, should pray for those who stand apart from the Truth.

9. Job's fortune is restored to him at the end of this book (Job 42:10–17). Job, now humbled, is exalted. How does this apply to our lives?

This is how the Lord works. Time and again the Scriptures demonstrate that the Lord exalts those who are humble. We see this working in Confession and Absolution. When we repent, the Lord graciously forgives and restores us.

10. Does God ever answer the question of why Job suffered? Why or why not?

Not really. God doesn't give the exact answer. Ultimately, the Lord doesn't have to give an answer to people as if He were on trial. He graciously gives us answers and teaches us. Please note that while some might still be unsatisfied that the exact answer wasn't specifically stated, Job was "satisfied" at the end. Much more could be said about this; however, it will be even more important to see the final answer God gives in the next study.

CLOSING PRAYER

God our Savior, Your mercy is for those who fear You, from generation to generation. You scatter the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. You exalt those of humble estate. You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. Grant us true humility before You, that we might always be exalted by You. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.