

Comments About Job 38–39

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss the book of Job. There will be times when we talk about (1) a group of chapters, (2) one chapter and (3) a portion of a chapter. Today, we will discuss Job 38-39.

I hope this project encourages you to review the valuable history and lessons found in the book of Job.

What was Job’s sin?

In the article on May 26 discussing Job 2:11-13, I mentioned two verses that gave succinct statements about Job’s sin.

- The servant Elihu said: “Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain; he multiplies words without knowledge” (Job 35:16).

At the end of the book of Job, God is recorded as confronting Job with two presentations—Job 38-39 and Job 40-41.

- God began his first confrontation by asking: “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” (Job 32:2).

At this time, I want to add a third verse that also gives a succinct statement about Job’s sin.

- “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it” (Job 40:2).

Confronting Job

Early in Elihu’s commentary to Job, we see him issue a challenge to Job.

Job 33:5—“If you can answer me, set your words in order before me; take your stand.”

When God finally talked to Job, He confronted Job twice.

Job 38:3—“Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.”

Job 40:7—“Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.”

Series of questions

When God confronted Job, He asked a series of questions.

Job 38:4—"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?"

Job 38:5—"Who determined its measurements? . . . Who stretched the line upon it?"

Job 38:6—"To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone?"

Job 38:12—"Have you commanded the morning since your days began and caused the dawn to know its place?"

Job 38:19—"Where is the way to the dwelling of light?"

Job 38:22—"Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail?"

Job 38:28—"Has the rain a father?"

Job 38:36—"Who has put wisdom in the mind? Or who has given understanding to the heart?"

Job 38:37—"Who can number the clouds by wisdom?"

Job 39:1—"Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats bear young? Or can you mark when the deer gives birth?"

Job 39:26—"Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, and spread its wings toward the south?"

Job 39:27—"Does the eagle mount up at your command, and make its nest on high?"

Job 40:2—"Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it."

Job's response to first challenge

Here is Job's response to God's first challenge.

Job 40:4-5—"Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth. Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

Although that response may appear sufficient to many people, God proceeded to confront Job again (Job 40-41).