

Finally . . . A Word From God

When God Speaks – Part I

Job 38:1-4

Introduction

I was given an article a few days ago by one of our church staff members, entitled, “The World’s Luckiest or Unluckiest Man . . . You Decide”.

On a cold January day in 1962, a music teacher named Frane Selak was traveling by train to Dubrovnik. The train jumped the tracks and plunged into an icy river, killing seventeen passengers. Selak was able to swim to shore, suffering from a broken arm, shock, and bruises, but happy to be alive.

One year later, in 1963, Selak was traveling by plane from Zagreb to Jijeka, when a door blew off and literally sucked him out of the aircraft. A few minutes later the plane crashed, killing all the passengers. Selak, however, woke up in a hospital, having landed in a haystack and sustaining only minor injuries.

In 1966, he was riding on a bus that went off the road and into a river. Four people were killed, but not Selak.

In 1970, he was driving a car that suddenly caught fire. Selak managed to stop and get out just before the fuel tank exploded and engulfed the car in flames.

In 1973, a faulty fuel pump sprayed gas all over the engine of his new car, blowing flames through the air vents. He escaped that as well.

Around this time, Selak’s friends began calling him, “Lucky”. I guess so! However, this was not the end of it.

In 1996, Selak was driving on a mountain road when he came around a bend and saw a truck coming

straight for him. He drove the car through a guardrail, jumped out in mid air, was snagged by a tree, and literally watched as his car exploded 300 feet below.

As I read this, do you know what I thought? Never get in a car with this guy – or if you do, wear a parachute!

In 2004, at the age of seventy-five, Selak had become somewhat famous for his narrow escapes. He was hired to star in an Australian television commercial for Doritos. He accepted, but then changed his mind and refused to fly to Sydney for filming. What was his reason? He said he did not want to test his luck.

We can hardly blame him.

If you lived in ancient times – perhaps no more than 300 years after the flood had covered the earth, creating a new landscape, carving out the Grand Canyon and raising the mighty Himalayan mountains, creating an amazing fossil record that recorded worldwide this sudden and traumatic catastrophe – you would have met a man named Job. His nickname would have been anything but “Lucky”. In fact, he became a byword, or a nickname, for the most unfortunate man alive.

This was made even more traumatic by the fact that Job was a righteous, devout follower of God. His worship of God was faithful and sincere.

However, unknown to Job, Satan had challenged Job’s motive for worship. In fact, Lucifer claimed that mankind would only worship God if God paid them off with good things. So God effectively said,

“Take away the good in Job’s life and you will see genuine faith.”

This began a series of severe trials. Job made no miraculous escapes – had no soft haystack on which to land or tree to keep him from falling. It took around thirty-nine seconds for messengers to deliver the shocking news to Job that he had lost his children, his businesses, and his cattle.

It was not much longer before Job lost the encouragement of his wife, as well as his own health to a host of diseases and infirmities that included constant fever, pain, boils, diarrhea, vomiting, itching, loss of appetite and sleep – along with deep, unrelenting grief.

Throughout the course of Job’s suffering, the heavens have been silent. There has been no word from God.

Some of Job’s close friends arrived from afar and sat with him for a week in stunned silence. They then rose, one after another, to condemn him in speech after speech.

Job endured it all. And while his perspective and patience with God ebbed and flowed, his faith in God remained intact.

Finally, in this dramatic conflict of suffering and God’s silence, the condemning speeches ended. All the men sat quietly, as if utterly exhausted.

Chapter 38 in Job’s account changed everything – for it was then that God spoke.

God Speaks to Job – Through Creation

Turn to God’s amazing words of comfort to Job, beginning in Job chapter 38. Notice Job 38:1a.

Then the Lord answered Job . . .

Stop at this point for a moment. Aren’t these wonderful words – “Then the Lord answered Job!”?

We have been waiting for this moment for nearly a year. Job has been waiting for an eternity. Finally – a word from God.

This speech, by the way, is the longest by the Lord recorded in scripture. He will deliver amazing words of comfort, but nothing like we would expect. In fact, His speech will entirely surprise the average Christian who has come to expect pat answers and simple solutions.

Note how the voice of God arrives on the scene, in Job 38:1b. God answered,

. . . out of the whirlwind . . .

Was it irony that God’s voice would come from within the very same thing that took the lives of Job’s children? Was it a subtle message that even the devastating effects of natural disasters are not apart from the control of God?

I believe so, even though God does not call attention to the vehicle of His revelation.

God says, in Job 38:3a,

Now gird up your loins like a man . . .

In other words, “Get ready for a tough assignment.”

In Job’s day, when a man began a difficult physical task, or began to run, or even to fight, he would pull up the bottom of his robe between his legs and tuck it into his belt.

The Lord is effectively telling Job to get ready for a difficult and challenging task.

The challenging task was a test. God says, in Job 38:3b (paraphrased),

. . . I want you to instruct Me Job; I want you to give Me some answers!

In other words, “Get ready for the toughest pop quiz of your life.”

This is the first question, in Job 38:4.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding,

What God is about to do over the course of two speeches actually, is ask Job question after question. The questions are all about creation – all 77 of them.

Before we go any further, I want you to understand what God does not do.

- God does not condemn Job, He guides him.
- God does not apologize for anything that has happened.
- God does not justify His allowances.
- God does not offer an explanation for Job to consider.
- God does not even offer a word of sympathy for this grieving man.
- God does not answer the question of suffering in the world to someone who has experienced so much suffering.
- God does not explain Satan’s accusation or direct involvement in Job’s losses.

- God does not explain why bad things happen to good people and why good things happen to bad people.
- God does not, as incredibly fascinating as I find it, provide an explanation; God points to creation.

Beginning in chapter 38, when God begins to speak comfort to Job, He does not answer any questions; He will ask questions – 77 of them. He will do this over the course of two speeches.

1. The first speech is recorded from Job chapter 38 verse 1 through chapter 40 verse 1.
2. The second speech is recorded from Job chapter 40 verse 6 through the end of chapter 41.

Unlike some of our past sessions in which I covered the entire speech of Eliphaz or Elihu – spanning six chapters at a time – I want to slow the train down with this captivating response from God. I also want to note Job’s responses.

After God’s first round of questions, Job responds by saying, in Job 40:3-4, basically, “I’m not saying anything – because I don’t know.”

This is total humility before God.

Have you ever had a pop quiz and knew none of the answers? It was not exactly your greatest moment in school, was it?

I had the opportunity, at Dallas Theological Seminary last week, to eat dinner with Dr. Dwight Pentecost, one of my favorite professors. Though Dr. Pentecost is now in his 80s, I believe, he is still spry and full of humor and energy – and is still teaching a class.

He laughed when I told him about a moment that I still remember from the time I was in his class on the life of Christ. We used the book he had written, by the way, called *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. Dr. Pentecost never had any notes with him; simply his Bible and his roll book. He had all of his lessons memorized.

It was his custom to look at his roll book, call out a random name, and quiz the student on the spot. This was highly intimidating in a class of forty students – we never knew.

One day, Dr. Pentecost looked at his red roll book and said, “Mr. Davey.”

I answered, “Yes, sir.”

“Would you tell us the significance of Christ’s answer to the Pharisees in our text today?”

I did not know the answer and with Dr. Pentecost, I knew not to bluff. I replied, “I’m sorry, Dr. Pentecost, I don’t know the answer.”

Without blinking an eye or even looking up, he said, “If you had read your assignment for today, you would have seen the answer on page 278.”

This was not exactly a highlight of my seminary career.

When I told Dr. Pentecost over dinner that I had never forgotten that moment, he thought it was hilarious.

Job is going to be taken to school – to a class where he is the only student – and has just been asked to stand and recite some answers.

God’s quiz will cover:

- cosmology,
- oceanography,
- meteorology,
- astronomy, and
- zoology.

God will ask Job about:

- the depths of the ocean,
- the measurement of the earth,
- the origin of and division of light, and
- the hydrological cycles and atmospheric elements of: snow, hail, wind, rain, dew, ice, and frost.

God will ask Job about the constellations and their movements; of Orion and Pleiades.

He will ask Job to explain the ways of animals like the lion and horse and raven and deer and wild donkey and ostrich, the hawk and the eagle.

God will describe Behemoth and Leviathan and then ask Job if he knows how to control them.

Job will say, “Lord, I don’t know any of the answers.”

Is God trying to humiliate Job? No. He is actually attempting to develop in Job greater trust and faith in His power and sovereignty and creative care and grace.

However, think about the fact that here sits a man, devastated and diseased. He has lost his children, his health, his family, and his finances. He is bankrupt, bereaved, and on the edge of irreparable bitterness. And God wants him to think about an ostrich? He wants to take him to the zoo? What kind of help can that bring? What kind of answer is that?

Why Creationism is Foundational to Christianity

What I want to do today is simply reveal why God's creation is not some incidental paragraph in a creed, but a vital part of Christianity. It is absolutely necessary to our relationship with Christ and our sense of hope when in the midst of trials. Creationism is not some incidental viewpoint – it is a foundational piece of our salvation.

If this sounds like an exaggeration, it is only because the church has bowed to the pressure of evolution and the disregard of scripture.

I received an email from a gentleman in our church this past winter, which I kept it to illustrate this very point. He wrote, "My wife especially appreciates Colonial when she has to be away on a Sunday. Yesterday was such a Sunday. She was in Charleston, South Carolina, for the weekend and chose to attend a Congregational church nearby. As it happened, yesterday was "Transfiguration and Evolution Sunday" for that church. You may have read in the newspaper that churches across the country are having "evolution Sunday" in honor of Charles Darwin's birthday this month (month of February)."

Frankly, I had no idea! Can you imagine churches honoring the evolutionary principles of a man rather than the creation of God through Christ?

This man said in his email that the clergyman actually preached that Jesus' transfiguration was just another step in evolution. He said his wife ended up getting up and walking out during the sermon. Good for her!

The reason the average person is surprised to discover God's comfort through His creative handiwork is because the average person does not believe God created anything. They believe it all just evolved with enough time and chance, or that God sort of jump-started everything and allowed billions of years for life to evolve.

There is no comfort in this because it is man-made. It strips the word of God of meaning; it plays havoc with the words of scripture.

Frankly, there is nothing more pivotal than Genesis chapter 1. It is against that chapter that Satan has launched his fiercest attack. Theory after theory abounds. In fact, by 1808 there were catalogued no less than 80 theories of origin.

Now, even those who claim to be evangelicals are holding to an old earth belief known as "framework

hypothesis". This is the belief that the days of creation are overlapping stages of a long evolutionary process. Dr. Meredith Kline of Westminster Theological Seminary has propagated this view in recent years. The view basically states that some of the "days" of creation in Genesis 1 are symbolic expressions that have nothing to do with time – it is just poetry. The formation of the earth took billions of years and the record of scripture is simply a metaphorical framework that would overlay our scientific understanding of creation. God simply guided the process of evolution.ⁱ

If Genesis chapter 1 can be written off as a metaphor because it is simply too fantastic to take literally, then why believe in the Flood, or the tower of Babel, or any other biblical miracle? How fantastic is the Virgin birth and the atonement of Christ for sin on a cross?

Defending creationism is not some secondary issue; it is a vital issue for the believer. Let me give several reasons why.

1. **First, without a literal six day creation, we have no scripture to trust.**

One of the best ways to interpret scripture, in fact, is to allow scripture to interpret itself.

What does the rest of scripture say?

The scriptures repeat the integrity of God's creation of Adam and Eve. The scriptures do not talk of amoebas that eventually came to be a man and a woman, but of the creation of a man and a woman.

Jesus Christ Himself said,

But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. (Mark 10:6)

Paul wrote to Timothy,

. . . it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. (I Timothy 2:13)

Every passage of scripture referring to the Genesis account treats it as an historical, literal event. God is the author of scripture and He was the only eyewitness who saw the first of creation brought out of nothing into existence.

John wrote, in John 1:1-2,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

In case we did not get this, John goes on, in John 1:3,

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Every time the New Testament refers to creation, it always refers to a past, completed event – an immediate work of God, not an ongoing still-occurring process of evolution.

The entire Old Testament system of Sabbath worship hinged upon a literal understanding of six-day creation.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day . . . (Exodus 20:11)

Without a literal creation, we have no scripture to fully trust.

2. Secondly, without a literal creation, we have no gospel to preach.

The apostles preached to the evolutionary pantheists of their day – Buddhists, Buddhism having already reached the Mediterranean world by the time of Christ, as well as Stoics, and Gnostics who believed neither in one supreme personal God nor in a special creation. These were the scholars of their day.

In Acts 14, we read that Paul cried out to these philosophers and scholars, saying,

. . . we . . . preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. (Acts 14:15)

In Athens, again, creationism is part of the gospel message, as Paul preached,

[This unknown God is] The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth . . .

. . . He Himself gives to all people life and breath . . .

Listen to this.

and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, (Acts 17:23-26)

How did God do this? He is God.

As David wrote,

. . . He spoke, and it was done . . . (Psalm 33:9a)

John Wesley wrote, “He created all there is and He didn’t even half try.”

The intellectual establishment of nearly every nation has repudiated creationism and some theory of evolutionism reigns supreme. The myths of evolution dominate Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism and animism. It even creeps into Islam, Judaism and liberal Christianity.ⁱⁱ

It is no surprise that Satan would attack the word of God in this because without creation, the reliability of scripture is shattered and our gospel is rendered powerless.

Without creation, there is no gospel message.

Consider the fact that if Genesis 1-3 is not a literal account of origins and Adam really was not the first man and the forefather of the human race, then the Bible’s explanation of how sin entered the world is only one more myth.

Worse than this, if we did not fall in Adam, as our representative, we cannot be redeemed in Christ, the representative of the redeemed, for Christ is considered the head of a new redeemed race, just as Adam is considered the head of the fallen race.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. (I Corinthians 15:22)

Paul cannot stress this enough as he writes,

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin . . .

. . . much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. . . .

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned . . . much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through . . . Jesus Christ.

(Romans 5:12-17)

Without a literal creation, we have no scripture to trust.

Without a literal creation, we have no gospel to preach.

3. Thirdly, without a literal creation, we have no heaven to reach.

The truth is, evolution eliminates the God of Genesis, and that eliminates the God of Revelation, who comes to recreate a new heaven and a new earth.

This is the world to come. The promise of a new creation is portrayed in scripture as the result of God's powerful word – not a billion year process.

If you believe by faith, as Hebrews 11 says, that God created out of nothing everything, then you have no trouble believing that God can suspend the New Jerusalem in the sky above Jerusalem; you have no trouble believing that He can transform your body into an immortal, sinless body that can both eat food and fly.

Heaven is already completed. God does not have huge oysters in heaven working on the gigantic pearls that will one day become the gates of heaven. No, by the word of His mouth, they have already been created.

Christ hinted at His ability to circumvent the normal processes of time in His own miracles. When He healed the lame, they got up and walked. This was more than just walking. Some had been lame from birth, or for years. They had no mental capability or muscle memory whereby they could, with balance, begin to walk. But Christ not only healed this disease, He deposited instantaneously into their brains and bodies all the necessary wiring and history and experience to walk. (Matthew 21:14)

Christ healing the blind was an amazingly creative act. There are, I have read, inside the human eye, approximately 107 million cells.

Even with his limited knowledge, Charles Darwin admitted that the human eye caused him to doubt his theory more than anything else.

About seven million cells are cones, we now know, each loaded to fire off a message to the brain when a photon of light crosses its path. The other approximately 100 million cells are called rods. Cones are less sensitive to light than rods, but are capable of distinguishing a thousand shades of color.

The human brain will receive millions of reports simultaneously from eye cells. The brain absorbs, sorts, and organizes them all to give an image of what we are looking at.

Christ was demonstrating a fraction of His understanding of the human anatomy and functions that needed restoring or refashioning in order to make someone capable of seeing. It would be centuries before science would catch up to His breathtaking power.

God created through Christ, the universe and mankind and the living creatures – all bearing maturity and ability to function.

Christ revealed this same power when He attended a wedding, as you may remember in John chapter 2. The wine had run out. He told the servants to pour water into the water pots and then to draw some out and take it to the headwaiter. At some point between pouring and drawing, the water turned to wine. All the marks of age and maturity were there. Christ completely bypassed the fermentation and aging process. He made wine – instantly!

In Mark chapter 6, Christ invited the five thousand to sit down on a hillside and had five loaves of bread and two pickled fish the size of sardines, commonly pickled and eaten with the dry bread to help give the meal some taste. He took those five loaves and two fish and fed five thousand. He did not go fishing for more fish. He did not plant wheat and wait for it to grow. He bypassed all the normal processes of time and created fish and bread – ready to eat.

John MacArthur wrote,

When God created the earth and its creatures, there were immediately eagles soaring overhead; elephants roaming around with full tusks appearing to be fifty years old; mountains, rivers, waterfalls and canyons; features that the typical geologist would surmise had been formed by several ages of wind and water and earthquake. But they were made in one day. And when Adam looked up into the heavens and saw that incredible expanse with millions of bright stars, he was seeing light from millions of light-years away – even though these stars had all been there less than four days. The light he saw was itself part of God's creation.ⁱⁱⁱ

How did God do it? He spoke and it was so.

Here is a man who lost everything. And what will God say? “Job, look at some of what I've created. This is My power and providence. Let Me take you on a tour of the created order; from the heavens, to the earth, to the animals.”^{iv}

In the amazing mind of God, He knew that a show and tell of creation's magnificence would help settle the heart of a grieving man because it would elevate God to supreme Creator and Job could find security and hope in that Creator God.

Science is still catching up to the incredible demonstration of God's creative power and design.

The study of DNA has exploded on the scene. The amazing creative handiwork of God has been

given an entirely new level of appreciation. I have read that our DNA has enough information within it to fill six million pages, yet these strands are so small that they could all fit into one ice cube. However, if our DNA were unwound and joined together end to end, the strand would literally stretch from the earth to the sun and back again 400 times.

This is who we are; this is why we smile like we do and enjoy the taste of certain things and the touch and feel of others. This is the information that makes us who we are. This is the handiwork of our Creator. This gives us value and meaning and beauty and purpose.

God created all . . . God knows all . . . God understands everything.

Christ with His power to create, bypassing the processes of time and working all things according to His will, has already sat down at the right hand of God's authority, having completed heaven. When John saw heaven in Revelation, it was not under construction. God spoke and the splendor of the heavenly city was completed.

Conclusion – Lessons from God's Speech

We do not know all the answers, but God does. And God will reveal to Job that He is worthy of trust, even without explanations or answers from on high.

A college student went to class to take a final exam at the end of the semester. To his amazement he did not know the answer to any of the questions. Not one! He knew that he had no possibility of passing the exam, so he attempted to win his professor's mercy with humor. Across the top of the exam page he wrote, "Only God knows the answer to these questions; Merry Christmas!" He turned in the paper and went home for the Christmas break. During the holidays, just following Christmas, the student received in the mail his exam that had been graded by his professor. At the top, it read in big letters, "In that case, God gets 100 and you get a 0; Happy New Year!"^v

Job is going to be asked 77 questions – and they will reveal he has none of the answers, but that God is in control of everything.

There will be several lessons that will emerge from this pop quiz from God to Job. Let me give them.

1. First, if God created us, He can save us; if He fashioned us, He can forgive us.

What the evolutionists destroy for themselves is the only personal God capable of taking them and, by His grace, making them a new creation. Instantly they would be newly born; a member of a new race – redeemed!

The God capable of fashioning us is capable of forgiving us.

2. Secondly, if God is powerful enough to create the universe, He is powerful enough to control the universe.

Job would have wondered about this – he will be reassured.

3. Thirdly, if God can create this existing universe, He can create an eternal universe.

Ladies and gentlemen, what we are about to discover as God begins to speak comfort, is that the solution to suffering is not a proposition; not an answer; not an explanation, but ultimately and finally, it is a Person.

Listen as Peter writes,

Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (I Peter 4:19)

Our hope in suffering is bound up in the truth that God is creator.

- God created all there is.
- God controls all that He created.
- God coincides what He controls to bring about His eternal concerns.

We can trust Him. Why? Because He is the Creator God.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 10/21/2007 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ John MacArthur, The Battle for the Beginning (W Publishing, 2001), p. 20.

ⁱⁱ Henry Morris, The Remarkable Record of Job (Master Books, 1988), p. 94.

ⁱⁱⁱ MacArthur, p. 56.

^{iv} Derek Thomas, The Storm Breaks: Job Simply Explained (Evangelical Press, 1995), p. 286.

^v Steven J. Lawson, Holman Old Testament Commentary, Job (Holman Reference, 2004), p. 333.