

Lord of All the Weather

When God Speaks – Part III

Job 38:19-38

Introduction

In the late 1970s, a book was published that created a phenomenal, somewhat unexpected audience. In fact, to this day, the following of fans after *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* cannot come close to matching the attention this particular book received.

Alex Haley was the author of a fictional book entitled *Roots*, which became a record breaking series on television, watched by 130 million people.

In Haley's loosely told family history, he begins with the story of Kunta Kinte – who seven generations earlier, in 1767, was kidnapped in Gambia and transported to the Province of Maryland to be sold as a slave. The novel follows the story of Kunta and succeeding generations.

While doing his research, Alex Haley went to the village of Jufureh, where Kunta Kinte grew up and which is in existence to this day, and listened to a tribal historian tell the story of Kunta's capture and abduction from home. Haley also traced the records of the ship, *The Lord Ligonier*, which he said carried his ancestor to America.

Haley said the most emotional moment of his life was on September 29, 1967, when he stood at the site in Annapolis, Maryland, where his ancestor had arrived two hundred years before.

Roots has been published in thirty-seven languages and Haley won a special Pulitzer prize in 1997.

There are many people – black and white – who doubt the historicity of *Roots*. In fact, Alex Haley

had to settle out of court on charges of plagiarizing another author.

My point is not whether or not everything Haley said was true or original. My point is in the response of people, literally around the world.

When Haley's book was aired in mini-series format on television, more than 60% of Americans tuned in. What was the reason for this incredible interest?

For starters, *Roots* emphasized that African Americans have a long history and that not all of that history is lost, as many believed. But the popularity of this series obviously crossed racial divides. Why? It spoke to the human heart's desire and longing to connect with the past.ⁱ

One author wrote, "This man's link to his past gave a sense of meaning to us all."ⁱⁱ

This is really a search for dignity and value, is it not? Our search for roots is ultimately a search for the meaning of life.

R. C. Sproul wrote,

If our past history tells us that we have emerged from the slime, that we are only grown up germs, what difference can it possibly make whether we are black germs or white germs; whether we are free germs or enslaved germs? Who cares? We can sing of the dignity of man, but unless that dignity is rooted in that which has intrinsic value, all our songs of human rights and dignity are so much whistling in the dark. If all you have is the present – with no history – there is no dignity, only nothingness.ⁱⁱⁱ

No wonder mankind, regardless of race or nation or creed, on every continent asks the same questions, “Who am I?” and “Where did I come from?” which is another way of asking, “Do I really matter?”

It is no surprise then, to find out in my research this past week that genealogical studies have literally skyrocketed in the past thirty years. In fact, I discovered there are on average more than a thousand hits on web sites dealing with genealogical resources – around 1,300 hits every minute of every day.

Tens of millions of people are involved in tracing their own roots to discover where they came from. It is an attempt to help discover who they are and where they might be heading.

One of the benefits of a believer is that we have been given the ultimate resource in genealogical studies. We know the names of our ancestors – beginning with the first ancestor who started the entire family tree – Adam. Our value is rooted in history, revealed to us by God.

What tragic confusion abounds, not only about our past, but our future, when this genealogical resource is discarded.

I recently read the National Public Radio transcript of an interview with singer Mary Chapin Carpenter who came out with a hit song called *Grand Central Station*. She said in the interview that she was inspired by an iron worker who had been on the scene when the towers fell on 9/11. He worked at Ground Zero for days afterward. The iron worker said that at the end of each shift, he felt compelled to go to the train station so that the souls of the victims could follow him. Carpenter said, “He’d find himself just going to Grand Central Station and standing on the platform and thinking whoever wanted to go home could catch the train home.”^{iv}

This was her inspiration. How tragic is that? How hopeless and meaningless is that?

If our past is disconnected from the revelation of God, then not only is our past meaningless, but our future is equally pointless. We are just souls floating around hoping to land someplace better than this.

God has spoken in His word. In fact, He speaks to one of our ancestors named Job, who happened to be wondering about the value of his life. He informs Job of his roots. In fact, He takes Job on a verbal tour of the origins of the universe, this planet, and life itself.

Our history has its roots in the hands of God. Our future has its hope in the hands of God.

God Questions Job to Reveal His Mastery over All

As God speaks to Job, beginning in Job chapter 38, He continues to reveal His creative mastery over the present conditions of Job’s world – and ours. He reveals His mastery over the universe by asking Job one unanswerable question after another.

Look at Job 38:18a.

Have you understood the width of the earth?...

In other words, “Job, do you know the measurements of planet earth?”

Job did not. We do. Planet earth has:

- approximately 57 million square miles of land surface;
- approximately 139 million square miles of water surface;
- an equatorial circumference of 24,902 miles.

I had to look this up, so hold your applause. I was barely interested in physics as a kid – physical education, yes!

The point God is making *is not* that these questions are unanswerable by Job and we can answer some of them. God’s point *is* to bring Job to the rather obvious recognition that not only does he not understand all of God’s creative handiwork, he cannot control what he does understand – he, and we, cannot control even the weather.

Can anyone here control the rain? Bring it on! Do not hold back. Our state of North Carolina is experiencing an historic drought, and anxiety levels are increasing as water levels are decreasing.

Can anyone time the frost or bring us snow on December 24th? And make sure they melt by the following Monday?

The only person to control the weather by His own power was Christ who walked on top of water and allowed Peter to do the same – although momentarily. (Matthew 14) Christ then could say to the raging storm, “Be still,” and not only did the waves cease their churning, but the raging wind immediately became calm. (Mark 4:39)

God, in the remaining verses of Job chapter 38, will not only reveal His creation of origins and history, but His control over the present conditions of weather. He will take Job on a verbal tour of a dozen things relative to weather conditions.

Questions about light and darkness

God begins with light and darkness in verses 19-20 of Job chapter 38.

***Where is the way to the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where is its place,***

***that you may take it to its territory and
that you may discern the paths to its home?***

One author wrote,

Perhaps nothing in all of physics is more fascinating or more mysterious than light. Light is the single most important source of energy and heat on earth. Without light, life on earth would be impossible for very long. Virtually all the earthly mechanisms we depend on for the transfer of energy are derived, ultimately, from light. Wind, the water cycle, and ocean waves would all cease if the earth were to remain in utter darkness for very long. The earth would quickly turn cold and all life would cease.^v

Is it any wonder that the first creative order from God and the starting point of creation was,

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. (Genesis 1:3)

Now the record of Genesis informs us that the light sources of sun, moon, and stars were not created until the fourth day. So, the form of this light, as God’s early act of creation, is unknown to us. It might have been some light that emanated from a specific God-ordained place or perhaps it was the disclosure of His own Shekinah glory.

It should not be difficult for us to believe that the One whose glory is described as pure light can command light to appear. In fact, the book of Revelation tells us that in heaven there will be no need for the sun to shine because the light will be provided by the revealed,

. . . glory of God . . . and its lamp is the Lamb. (Revelation 21:23)

“Job, do you know where the light lives and the darkness hides?”

By the way, the more we discover about light and harness it, the more amazing possibilities are opened.

Light gives us the ability to heat a cup of coffee in the microwave; listen to radio waves; get burned at the beach with ultraviolet rays; get checked out by the doctor through x-rays; get held up at the airport by security x-rays.

We have all seen crews laying pipe along the roads through which fiber optic lines will be laid.

Fiber optic material actually moves along tiny pulses of light at literally the speed of light with pinpoint precision. These pulses are basically rapidly flashing on and off signals, carrying everything from digitized telephone calls to video images. All of this is possible because of the marvelous properties of light.^{vi}

Your eyeglasses change the direction of light so precisely that you can see images better because of them.

How did this amazing thing called light come to be?

God said in Isaiah 45:7, “I am,”

the One forming light and creating darkness...

Look at a rather futuristic clue in Job 38:24a – something Job would never have imagined,

Where is the way that the light is divided . . .

We now know that the different colors of light are simply varying wavelengths of light in the spectrum. It was Isaac Newton in 1665, who discovered that the prism was not coloring the light, but was simply dividing the light into its varying wavelengths.

Prisms separate the colors of light because as the light passes through the prism, its direction is bent. Different color waves, moving then at different speeds, come out of the prism separated into a visible display.^{vii}

In Psalm 74:16b, David writes,

. . . You have prepared the light and the sun.

In Psalm 65:8b, he writes,

. . . You make the dawn and the sunset sing for joy.

Now, we would normally take this as poetic personification. The dawn and the sunset are visual, not audible. They are surely not literal music!

This is interesting in light of scientific discoveries. Could God be revealing through David something we have yet to discover – that light actually sings?

Well, if light and heat and sound are vibrations – wave and particle – the mere existence of color may have a musical harmony we have yet to hear.^{viii}

Would it not be fascinating to discover one day and hear for the first time, this symphony of light?

“Job, you have no idea about the elements of light and darkness which I have created,” God says.

Neither do we.

Questions about water

God moves on, in Job chapter 38, to mention forms of water – varied by weather conditions.

Look at Job 38:22-23a.

Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,

which I have reserved for the time of distress . . .

God could be referring to one of His plagues in Exodus 9:18-35, as He sent the hail to devastate the land of Egypt.

Perhaps this is a reference to Joshua 10:11, when God protected His people by sending hail upon the invading armies.

It may be a reference to the final judgment of God during the tribulation period when, as John writes in Revelation 16,

. . . huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe. (Revelation 16:21)

The storehouses of snow and hail are surely nothing less than the hand of God.

The creation of water is one of God's marvelous creations. Without it we would not be able to live. In fact, we would not exist.

The human body has been called a water machine, designed primarily to run on water and minerals. Listen to this: In just the last ten years medical science has begun to focus more on the healing ability of our body and its dependence on water. The human body is made up of over 70% water. Our blood is more than 80% water; our brain is over 75% water. The function of every cell in our body is controlled by electrical signals sent through our nervous system from the brain. Our nerves, in reality, are an elaborate system of tiny waterways.^{ix}

This is just the beginning.

“Job, have you ever thought about water – in so many different forms? What about snow – when cold temperatures turn its molecules into crystals of lovely and varied form?”

Why do snowflakes have such intricate beauty and symmetry? Why do they not all look alike?

What did Job understand in Job28:25, when he said that God,

. . . imparted weight to the wind and [weighed] the waters by measure.

We today, have the entire science of water known as hydrology, which is the study of the occurrence and behavior of water.

We now know that the global weights of air and water must be in critical relationship to each other in order to maintain life on earth. In fact, if the weights of either air or water were much different than they are, life as we know it could not survive. Planet earth was uniquely designed for life.

By the way, this passage also informs us that air and wind have weight. This was not confirmed until nearly four thousand years after Job wrote these words. What do you know?

The study of air and its weight has developed into the science of aerodynamics, which became the basis for aerospace developments.

God asks Job in verse 28 of chapter 38,

Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew?

Look back in verses 26-27.

[Who] brings rain on a land without people, on a desert without a man in it,

to satisfy the waste and desolate land and to make the seeds of grass to sprout?

“Job, can you explain how we get rain?”

Job could not – and we cannot fully, as I learned this week and was rather surprised.

We know that water is converted by solar energy into the vapor state. Since water vapor is lighter than air, it rises and then condenses around dust particles and salt particles. We are not sure how, but water droplets bind together to form larger and larger drops, which finally become so large that their weight is greater than the wind, causing them to fall to the ground as rain or hail or snow.

Look at God's words to Job in Job 38:37a.

Who can count the clouds by wisdom . . .

In other words, “I know the weight of the air and keep it balanced by My wisdom.”

Continue to Job 38:37b-38,

. . . [who can] tip the water jars of the heavens,

when the dust hardens into a mass and the clods stick together?

God is delivering truth that will take centuries for us to discover.

There is more mystery, however, in rain than we can understand. One scientist asked, “What causes the small droplets to join with others and become large enough to do this? Some clouds fall – or rain – while others grow dark and heavy but do not. Job gives the answer, which only the believer will appreciate, in Job 28:26,

God made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.’”^x

In other words, God makes it rain.

Henry Morris writes, “With the right combination of air turbulence and clouds, the complex forces generate an electrical field that produces lightning discharges and these violent electrical currents, in an complex energy exchange we do not yet fully understand, cause the small water droplets to bind together with others to form larger drops that then become too heavy to remain in the clouds and fall to the thirsty ground.”^{xi}

God said centuries ago to Job, in Job 38:25-26a,

Who has cleft a channel for the flood, or a way for the thunderbolt [literally, the lightning of thunder], to [cause it to] rain . . .

“Job, My handiwork uses everything from vapor to lightning to bring rain.”

Listen to *The Message* paraphrase of this paragraph:

Have you ever traveled to where snow is made, seen the vault where hail is stockpiled,

The arsenals of hail and snow that I keep in readiness for times of trouble and battle and war?

Can you find your way to where lightning is launched, or to the place from which the wind blows?

Who do you suppose carves canyons for the downpours of rain, and charts the route of thunderstorms

That bring water to unvisited fields, deserts no one ever lays eyes on,

Drenching the useless wastelands so they’re carpeted with wildflowers and grass?

And who do you think is the father of rain and dew, the mother of ice and frost?

You don’t for a minute imagine these marvels of weather just happen, do you?

The theme of this display was intended to reveal to Job that God not only created everything, He controls everything. He has established the laws of hydrology which water the earth and make life possible.

This is God’s doing; this is His providence.

David McKenna, the former president of Asbury Theological Seminary, recalled in his commentary on Job, a television show he watched in which a panel of economists were asked a final question – which received an interesting answer. The question was, “What is the greatest influence upon world economy?” The economists responded unanimously, “The weather.” After all our efforts to manage money and stock markets in order to control the economy, the honest confession is that the weather – a factor completely out of human control – will determine bull markets and bear markets, prosperity and depression, deficits and surpluses.^{xii}

The weather is the marvelous engine created by God which brings both blessing and sorrow, joy and suffering – all of it fulfilling the plan and purposes of God.

Just as we cannot understand the lightning, we cannot understand the hand behind the lightning.

It was not irony that God spoke from a whirlwind and referenced lightning. It was lightning that killed Job’s flocks and his employees and it was a whirlwind that toppled the house and killed all ten of his children.

By being given revelation about God’s creation and control of nature, Job was brought to trust and worship the nature of God.

When God speaks, it is done.

Our answer is not in what is done, but in who it is that speaks.

The leper came to Christ, riddled with this fatal disease, and said,

. . . “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” . . . (Luke 5:12-13)

The Creator stood before the tomb of Lazarus and cried,

. . . “Lazarus, come forth.”

And Lazarus came back to life. (John 11:43-44)^{xiii}

The Creator of life speaks healing and life, and the elements, both seen and unseen, obey Him.

On the day that Christ hung upon the cross – at noon on the day of this final sacrifice, when the sun was at its hottest and highest point – the sky suddenly grew dark and the light of the sun disappeared, as if a curtain had been drawn. The Gospels indicate that the sun was no longer visible. It seemingly disappeared as the sky grew dark and dangerous. All nature seemed to hide for three hours as the dreadful judgment against its Creator fell from God the Father. Then Jesus cried,

. . . ***“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46)***

This is the anguish of God the man, separated in judgment from God the Father. And all of His creation seemed to agonize with Him as an earthquake shook the planet and rocks literally split open as if ripped apart in pain.

Jesus cried again,

. . . ***“It is finished!” . . . (John 19:30)***

And He died.

It is interesting to me that the skies grew bright again, for at His death at 3 o’clock, the darkness lifted. The wrath of God was satisfied. It is as if nature could uncover its head and come out of hiding. The debt of sin had been paid in full.

“Job, can you call out and make it dark or dawn? Can you command the rain to fall or bring on the snow?”

“No. But I the Creator who commanded everything have everything under My command.”

Questions about the stars

God gives one more visual demonstration in Job chapter 38. Look at Job 38:31-33.

Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?

Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, and guide the Bear with her satellites?

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, or fix their rule over the earth?

“Look up Job, beyond the rain clouds and the lightning. Look at the stars. Can you manage and control them?”

Some point out that Pleiades is the constellation that belongs to the spring and Orion belongs to the winter. In other words, God is asking Job, “Can you change the seasons? Can you bring on spring and

delay the winter months? Do you have that power?”^{xiv}

Of course, Job would answer, “No.”

While the Bible is not a handbook on astronomy, whenever it speaks to the subject, it is without error and with precision.

Consider the fact that the ancients thought the moon was larger than the sun. Ordinary observation would lead to that conclusion. It is closer and seems larger.

How did Moses know that the sun was larger than the moon? He wrote,

. . . ***the greater light [God ordained] to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night . . . (Genesis 1:16 KJV)***

Moses did not know this, but God’s Spirit, breathed His infallible word through him and the truth was recorded.

Today we know that the sun could gobble up sixty million moons.

And what is the comparison of the earth and the sun in size? If the sun was the size of a basketball, the earth would be the size of the head of a pin. Planet earth is a speck in comparison to the sun.

The sun is huge.

Moses could have erred and referred to the sun as the greatest or largest object in the sky – which he did not. He said it was the greatest light in direct reference to the earth.

Now we know much more. We know that the star Antares, for example, is so large that it could hold 64 million suns. There is another constellation which includes the star Epsilon which is 27 billion times larger than the sun.

Teddy Roosevelt used to take guests that visited the White House out on the White House lawn after dark to look up at the stars. Sometimes he would even lie down on the grass and invite his guests to do the same. I would invite you to do this sometime. Then, after some time, he would get up, brush himself off, and say, “Well, I believe we are now small enough . . . let’s go on to bed.”

How small are we?

Conclusion

Who are we? Where did we come from? Do we matter?

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

what is man that You are mindful of him...

Psalm 8:3-4

Who are we that You would take thought of us?

This One who breathed the stars and planets into being – by the word of His mouth (Psalm 33:6); this transcendent Lord of the universe condescended to

become a human being – robed in flesh; fully man – yet still fully God. He came to our little blue speck. And having taken on flesh, we will see Him and walk with Him and worship Him and serve Him and reign with Him as His redeemed bride, for He will soon have us with Him inhabiting the royal city and ruling with Him the universe.

This is who we are. This is where we have come from. This is how much we matter. This is where we are going!

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 11/4/2007 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ James Montgomery Boice, Genesis: Volume 1 (Zondervan, 1982), p. 14.

ⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 15.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 15.

^{iv} National Public Radio, Morning Edition, May 6, 2004, <http://www.npr.org>.

^v John MacArthur, The Battle for the Beginning (W Publishing, 2001), p. 83.

^{vi} Ibid., p. 82.

^{vii} Ibid., p. 81.

^{viii} S. Ridout, The Book of Job (Loizeaux Brothers, 1919), p. 222.

^{ix} <http://aquasana.com>.

^x Henry Morris, The Remarkable Record of Job (Master Books, 2000), p. 38.

^{xi} Ibid., p. 39.

^{xii} David McKenna, Mastering the Old Testament: Job (W Publishing, 1986), p. 289.

^{xiii} John Phillips, Exploring Genesis (Loizeaux Brothers, 1980), p. 40.

^{xiv} Rideout, p. 233.