

God Responds with Life

Printed Text: Job 38:1, 4, 16, 17; 42:1, 2, 5; Mark 16:1-14, 20

Background Scripture: Job 38:1-4, 16, 17; 42:1-6; Mark 16

Devotional Reading: Luke 24:1-9 Job 38:1, 4, 16-17

Job 38:1, 4, 16-17

¹Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:

⁴ “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.

¹⁶ “Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? ¹⁷ Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness?”

Job 42:1, 2, 5

Then Job replied to the Lord: ² “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

Mark 16:1-14, 20

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶ “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’” ⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

⁹ When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹ When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it. ¹² Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. ¹³ These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either. ¹⁴ Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

²⁰ Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

INTRODUCTION

It may not be immediately apparent that there is a connection between the book of Job and the great Easter passage of Mark's Gospel. In the past two weeks, however, we have seen that Job did have glimpses of truth concerning the mysteries of resurrection and redemption (cf. Job

14:14-17). When God finally did answer Job's complaints, with firmness and yet with great grace, He reminded him of His complete sovereignty. He is the Lord of all things. As we celebrate Easter and study the resurrection account in Mark, we rejoice that His lordship extends to victory over death.

Job experienced a resurrection of his prosperity and fruitfulness (Job 42:12-17). New life appeared where there had been only death. How much more amazing is the new life that comes from God through Christ! With death swallowed up in life, what have we to fear?

LESSON BACKGROUND

This lesson sets two passages of Scripture in counterpoint: one from Job and the other from Mark. The passage in the book of Job offers a personal encounter between God and Job. The section from Mark deals with a personal encounter between the risen Christ and His disciples.

How do these two passages fit together? They both deal with difficult issues. They both deal with the need to trust. Both passages provide tangible reasons to trust. In the first passage God appears to Job and honors his request for a personal meeting. Many of Job's questions go unanswered. But Job is content in fellowship with God. Job is content to trust in the God who gives life.

Some of Job's unanswered questions are dealt with in the passage from Mark and elsewhere in the New Testament. Job wondered about life after death. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection settle the issue. Job wondered why the good suffer. Jesus was perfect, yet He faced horrific suffering. The disciples had something in common with Job: personal encounter with God caused them to trust God for what was not clear.

Today's Aim

- **Facts:** to study how Job found release from his troubles and the double blessings God provided and to study Christ's resurrection and the prospects of blessing that God provides for believers because of it.
- **Principle:** to be aware that divine blessings often follow human trouble and testing.
- **Application:** to aid students in realizing that when God puts them through trials, He provides life-enhancing blessings afterward.

God's Power Revealed to Job

A storm (whirlwind in KJV) is defined by Webster's Dictionary as a mass of air, as a tornado, rotating rapidly and advancing over land or sea. It is also defined as a destructive force like the great wind that came out of the wilderness and caused the house where Job's children were feasting to collapse (Job 1:19). Referencing Job 13:3, Job asked for an audience with God - he wanted to question God (see also 9:14-19; 31:35- Job desire is that God answers him). In Chapter 38, Job gets just what he asks for. God makes his presence known by the onset of a "whirlwind" by which He clearly speaks through in response to Job. This whirlwind not only signifies the power and strength of God but it also moves by the command. By having such a storm accompany His response, God was giving Job a striking object lesson of the point He would make with His probing questions.

1. What does the "storm" (Job 38:1) signify?

In verses 4 thru 17, God silenced Job's presumption in constantly wanting to ask the questions of God, by becoming Job's questioner. Specifically, in vs. 4, God asked Job where was he when He laid the foundation of the earth? In other words, Job, were you there when the frame of the earth was created? Then God commanded Job to answer Him, if he can. Prove that you were in the same place as I when the earth was fashioned and explain in precise detail without error how it came to be. In vs. 16, God asked Job if he has been to the "springs of the sea" or to the "depth" (which refers to the same place)? Here God is asking Job if he knows about the creativity of the waters. Job, do you know what lies at the very pit of the sea? Or, how many grains of sand are in the ocean? Or, why the waters never overflow the earth? Job had never been so far beneath the surface of the planet that he could observe the source of the ocean. In vs. 17, God asked rhetorically whether Job had seen the entryway to Sheol - by making this connection, God was indicating that His control extends to issues of life and death. Job did not really understand these matters, either.

Note: God never told Job about the reason for his pain, about the conflict between Himself and Satan, which was the reason for Job's suffering. He never gave Job any explanation at all about the circumstances of his trouble.

2. How did God demonstrate the foolishness of Job's questioning of His ways? (vs. 4-17)

After God's first interrogation of Job, there was a second interrogation (40:6-41:34). After all of this, Job still did not know why he suffered so profoundly, but he was done complaining, questioning, and challenging God's wisdom and justice. He was reduced to such utter humility, crushed beneath the weight of God's greatness, that all he could do was repent for his insolence. Without answers to all of his questions, Job quietly bowed in humble submission before his Creator and admitted that God was sovereign and that it is pointless to challenge His ways. By contrast, Job's power and understanding were so small that he could not rightly challenge God's fairness. The only thing Job could do was confess and repent.

3. How did Job respond to God's challenge? (42:1-6)

Job had just had an awe-inspiring encounter with God and had come to understand the divine rebuke. When Job said he had now seen God, he was seeing God through the eyes of faith. He had never so well grasped the greatness, majesty, sovereignty, and independence of God as he did at that moment.

4. What did Job mean by saying he had now seen God? (42:5)

Although God's dealings with Job were humbling, He was in reality acting graciously, restoring the relationship between them. His power was employed for the good of His child. For the same reason, His power brought about the great miracle we celebrate this week - a miracle that makes our relationship with Him possible. In reading Job, Chapter 42 in it's entirety, you will find that not only was Job's relationship restored with God but God also restored Job's losses when he (Job) prayed for his friends. The Lord blessed Job with twice as much as he had before.

5. How were God's dealings with Job both humbling and gracious?

Mark 16:1-1-7; 9-14; 20

God's Power Seen In Christ's Resurrection

Our lesson now shifts to the Gospel according to Mark.

At this time Jesus had been crucified (Mark 15:24-25) and buried in a tomb (Matt. 27:60). Standing nearby was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, observing the place where Jesus was buried. After the Jewish Sabbath had passed (the Sabbath officially ended at sundown on Saturday), Mary Magdalene who had been delivered from 7 demons (Luke 8:2), Mary the mother of James, and Solome were now able to anoint Jesus' body with spices which provided relief from the odor of death and also expressed love and respect for the deceased. Note: Jews did not embalm corpses, but wrapped them in perfumed burial cloths.

6. Who were the women that went to Jesus' tomb? (Mark 16:1)

The details of Mark 16:2 paint a marvelous picture of the significance of Jesus' resurrection. It was "very early in the morning," it was the first day of the week, and the sun was just rising.

7. What does Mark 16:2 highlight?

As the women walked to Jesus' tomb, a discussion took place amongst them. The women realized they had no men with them to move the heavy stone away from the entrance of the tomb but this did not stop the women from going. Even though they did not see how they would be able to perform their task they continued on. We may face similar situations, and at such times we need faith to remain steadfast, leaving the results to God.

As the women were approaching the tomb, they noticed that the stone had been rolled away. This was not to let Jesus out, but to let the witnesses in.

Note: The earthquake when the angel rolled away the stone (Matt. 28:2) may have affected only the area around the tomb, since the women apparently did not feel it.

As the women entered Jesus' tomb, they saw a man dressed in a long white garment (symbolized purity) sitting on the right side; and the women were afraid. First, the women realize the stone has been rolled away, they enter the tomb only to find Jesus' body gone and they encounter a man dressed in all white (said to have been an angel) who first spoke words of comfort to them. He told them not to be afraid.

He also told them who they were looking for and spoke in past tense - "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified," and he then told the women that Jesus is risen! He is not here! - Look and see for yourselves! Then the angel told the women to go and tell Jesus' disciples, and Peter - that He is going to meet up with them in Galilee. This does not mean that they would not see Him before that (John 20:19- 20) but simply that Jesus wanted to meet them again in the region where their ministry together had begun.

8. What did the angel at the tomb tell the women to do? (vs. 3-6)

The mention of Peter was significant because it shows the Lord's concern for him. It also was a sign of reassurance that despite his denials (3 times Peter denied knowing Christ), he was still considered a disciple. It also highlights Peter's need for reconciliation after his denial of the Lord.

9. What is the significance of the mention of Peter? (vs. 7)

The Gospel of Mark mentions the following post-resurrections:

An appearance to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11)

Mark said that Jesus first appeared to Mary Madalene of whom he had cast out seven demons. She went to tell those who were grief stricken over His crucifixion. They apparently did not remember the Lord's promise that He would rise again. When Mary relayed to them that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

An appearance to two travelers (Mark 16:12-13)

Mark next mentioned Christ's appearance to the two traveling through the countryside from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus When these witnesses went to tell it to the rest of them, they did not believe them either.

An appearance to the gathered apostles (Mark 16:14) Mark finished his account of the post-resurrection appearances by noting that Jesus came to the gathered apostles ("eleven" in the absence of Judas). Although there was great joy and fellowship, Mark chose to emphasize the chastisement Jesus gave for their refusal to believe the reports of His resurrection.

On the occasion mentioned here, Jesus has to speak sternly to the eleven because of their lack of faith and discernment. This is hardness of heart (also Mark 3:5; 6:52; 8:17). The phrase because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen means that Jesus expects us to believe credible testimony about Him. Very few people have had the privilege of seeing the risen Jesus personally. But Jesus still expects belief.

10. What post-resurrection appearances of Jesus does the Gospel of Mark mention? (vs. 9-14)

This is a summary statement of all that happens in the earliest church. Above all, the word is preached. It is obvious that the Lord blesses the efforts as the disciples are able to do the things that Jesus himself did.

11. Did the Lord give up on His disciples? (v. 20)

Conclusion

God reminded Job that He had created all things. He then used that power to renew his life. In Mark we read of Christ's resurrection power. This power now manifests itself in the ministries of His followers. We as believers need to recognize that there is a divine perspective in all that happens to us in life. It is easy to become earthbound and pessimistic if things do not go well but we need to look upward and by faith claim God's enduring grace and ultimate deliverance. Easter Sunday is a good time to be reminded that God created and sustains life.

Prayer

Dear Lord, I thank You that our redeemer does live and that we shall live again. Lord, as we go through the trials and tribulations of this life, it is a comfort to know that they won't last always. Continue to give us strength to endure until the end where we will find rest in your everlasting arms. Through the risen Christ, amen.

Thought to Remember

The presence of the Lord is better than answers.