

September 20th

Chapters 40-42

Job has no answer to any of God's questions in the first speech. Job admits legal defeat on the first charge. God then launches into the second speech, where he addresses Job's accusation that God is not just. Job has accused God of being unjust (of not upholding the righteous and not putting down the wicked). In this speech God portrays two mythological beings, Behemoth (the cosmic, evil chaos beast of the desert), and Leviathan (the cosmic, evil chaos beast of the sea). God portrays the way in which God subdued both beasts in due time. God does not necessarily tame cosmic evil immediately, in the timeline of human preference, but ultimately the entire cosmos (even the evil chaos beasts) are under God's control. Though these chaos beasts have no function that serves humanity, God allows them to live under submission to God, despite their potential for mischief and evil. This is part of the inscrutable mystery of the cosmos. God's wisdom is wider than humans are capable of understanding.

40: 6-14, God challenges Job to take God's place in being just. Does Job really have what it takes to put down the wicked? No.

40:15-24, Behemoth, the mythological chaos beast representing the desert is modeled after a hippopotamus. It is obedient only to its Maker.

41, Leviathan represents the sea, but the image God paints for us in Job is that of a mighty dragon. God describes its fearsome qualities, and its power that can only be domesticated by God, but God is also describing this beast which God created, in which God takes delight. This fearsome dragon creature, emblematic of the turbulent sea, is basically God's pet.

Chapter 42

Job at last responds to the Lord. Job had asked to "see" God face to face, and through the Lord's thunderous speech from the whirlwind, Job has experienced just that. Job remains the same righteous, man of integrity that he's always been, and because he is righteous and full of integrity he readily and humbly admits defeat in this legal case. Job admits that he spoke of things he did not understand (of the Lord's design of the world), and while he has committed no sin, he does humbly repent for speaking about that which he did not understand. Vs. 6 is not translated well, it should read, "therefore I retract and give up my dust and ashes." This is essentially

saying that he gives up his lawsuit, while not necessarily admitting that he is wrong as a person. He does admit that he spoke in ignorance, and now he has learned God's wisdom and repents of speaking in ignorance.

Epilogue (vs. 7), The Lord now turns to Job's "friends" and tells them that Job DID tell the truth (that God attacked an innocent man), while his friends sought to defend God from this accusation, and in so doing brought judgment upon themselves. The Lord makes a path to forgive the friends of their folly (the opposite of wisdom), saying they must make a burnt offering and have Job pray on their behalf. Job is assuming the role as priest for his community, and is being restored in relationship with his misguided friends. Job is likely still covered with boils, and yet he prays for these friends who never stopped to pray for him.

The Lord restored Job's relationship with his friends, then with his family, then restored his financial fortune and blessed him with more children. The family who came to eat with Job, came to offer him comfort and sympathy, unlike his friends. Strangely, Job's daughters (not his sons) are the ones who are named at the end of this chapter, and the writer makes note that they inherited along with their brothers, which was unheard of at this time. Job enacted gender-justice ahead of his time. Job's daughters are noted as the most beautiful of the land, and Job gives them unusually sensual names: Dove, Cinnamon, and Rouge-Pot. It's possible that the daughters are a metaphor for God's wild and wonderfully beautiful creation. Job reveals to us the depths of human suffering, and also the hope and promise of new life on the other side of suffering. We still don't have an answer as to WHY good people suffer, but we do see that even those who endure the greatest suffering are able to move on from that suffering through the course of life itself.
