

*'Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm.'* **38:1** Astonishing, revealing. The Lord of all finds Job his servant. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob speaks directly and personally to this broken yet faithful man. Speaking out of the storm. A phrase pointing to the terrifying, turbulent character of such a direct encounter with God. God speaking into the storms of Job's life. Job cries out for the opportunity to put his case before God. He gets more than he bargains for. Sisters and brothers, in biblical revelation this is up there with God directly speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai; the boy Samuel in the temple; God in Christ speaking to Saul on the road to Damascus. Such encounters demand careful attention. We are to listen. God is speaking. Is listening to God speak one of your priorities? The measure of that is your approach to reading the Bible. As a text book to be studied. Or as the prime means of listening to God speak. We have lost our way in this. Taking for granted the privilege of the living God speaking to us day by day in his word. How desperately we need to listen to the clear voice of God as we navigate the complexities of life. To restore and strengthen our confidence in God. To know the fullness of life found only in Jesus Christ. As we read in **Hebrews 1:1-3a** *'In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.'* God's astonishing words spoken directly to Job speak to us also. We learn about Job, and ourselves. We learn deep and life giving truths about our awesome God. God's words expose Job. Throughout this book Job's words reveal the heart of a true worshipper. A true worshipper out of ignorance daring to find fault with the way God governs his world. Strongly suggesting to God that allowing the righteous to suffer is not best practice as the loving ruler of the world. God says to Job, *'Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge?'* **38:2** *'Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!'* **40:2** Job's challenges don't shed light on a better way forward. They obscure the wisdom and purpose of God's government. Job the questioner now becomes Job the questioned. *'Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'* **38:3** By all means Job, question my wisdom and rule. If you do, prepare to engage. To have your ignorance exposed; your heart and mind opened to the wisdom of my ways. Remember

Job. I am God. You are not. Brothers and sisters are you finding fault with the way God rules the world? Do you have a better action plan for your life than God's unfolding purposes for you? As Christians we have the rich privilege of asking God 'why?' Not a licence to challenge the way God is running his world. When we question God is our motivation to seek greater understanding? Or is our desire to point out God's shortcomings because his purpose is inconvenient to the script we are writing for our life? God questions us to uncover our ignorance humbling us before him. This is the experience of Job. God says to him, *'Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.'* **38:4** God's questions lead Job, and us, to new insights into his creative power and sovereign purposes. What follows in this passage is breathtaking in its revelation. Revealing the ways of God we often struggle to understand or accept. There is more in this passage than you will hear in the next few minutes. Please read it and bow before our God in humble adoration. The majesty, creative power, sovereign wisdom and purpose of the one who rules the world is on display. Contrasted is the limited knowledge and understanding of humanity as represented by Job and the testimony of creation to its Creator and Ruler. Question after question drives that home. *'Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place,* **38:12** *'Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this.'* **38:18** *'Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion's belt reply?'* **38:31** Job's reply can only be No, No, No. Humanity is not only limited in knowledge but in its ability to rule and order creation. God created, orders and rules wild animals and birds. We are incapable of doing so. *'Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket?'* **38:39-40** *'Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will it stay by your manger at night?'* **39:9** *'Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south?'* **39:26** No, No, No. In effect God is saying: Job, allow me to rule the world as I see fit. As the Creator I alone have the power and authority to do so. I alone have the wisdom to do so for my glory. The governance of the world is beyond you. *'Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?'* **38:33** God affirms the goodness of creation; the source of cosmic joy. *'while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?'* **38:7** Such joy is overshadowed by the impact of evil. Job's life testifies to that. Weighing heavily on Job's heart is the

question of how evil coexists with the goodness of God. With his sovereign, loving rule as the Creator. God's response revealed through poetic use of biblical images linked to evil: the sea, darkness, death. *Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?' 'The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken.'* **38:8-11, 15** Beyond our understanding. Absent from our preferred blueprint for the ordering of the world. Evil present in the good created order. Evil allowed by God to play a limited role in God's purpose. A role that decisively ends with its final destruction. God speaks directly to Job. Despite the intensity of Job's suffering. In the face of the permission God gave Satan to strip Job of everything. God's word to Job: I have not made a mistake. I know what I am doing in your life and in every detail of the government of the world. As the true worshipper he is, Job listens. He responds. *'I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more.'* **40:4-5** As Job begins to grasp his unworthiness he starts the journey of humbly bowing before the greatness of God as he has never done before. Silenced by an understanding of his ignorance in the face of God's infinite wisdom. His journey of faith continues. Sisters and brothers, by the revelation of God we know God is sovereign over evil. Using evil in the service of his purposes to bring glory to himself. Reaching its pinnacle in the future final destruction of evil. Ultimate triumph over evil involves a decisive plan of overcoming evil with good. Seen in Jesus life and ministry. In Jesus victory over Satan by his death and resurrection. Final and complete when he returns in power and glory. Job's journey is ours. Are you able to accept the wisdom of God? Do you believe he knows what he is doing in your life and in every detail of the government of the world? Are you ready to bow humbly before the greatness of our God? Is your heart full of praise to our great God? Rejoice that God is in control. To God be the glory great things he has done so loved he the world that he gave us his Son.