

26b JOB

Let's resume our study now in Job chapter 38. Here's the thing. Now, we spend a lot of time going through and seeing what God has to say about the founding of the world and the angelic audience that observed it, right? My question is, so what? Why does God bring up this subject? It's interesting.

Everybody loves angels. Boy, remember a few years ago, all those books that came out on angels and you couldn't swing a dead cat without hitting something to do with angels. There were angels in the bookstore, angels on television, touched by an angel, angels in the outfield, I mean, over and over and over, every place in the world, just angels, angels everywhere.

People are fascinated with angels. They love to hear about them and so on. But when you're in the midst of a big bunch of problems, that's really not the first thing.

Somebody said, well, you know, think about angels and you'll feel better. It meant they had a thing where you would call on the angels. They had people praying to angels to help solve their problems because, of course, you can't get through to God.

He's busy, and if you're not a Catholic, you can't get Mary to wake God up and get Him to act on your behalf. And the saints, they're all on the Catholic side of things, so you've got to go to the angel, see if you can get an angel to pay attention to your problem. Seriously, though, here's my question.

We're still there with Job, and the friends and the coterie of audience participants is still there. God is speaking out of the whirlwind. This great production number God has put on to appear in the whirlwind and speak, and He says, gird yourself up and answer like a man.

I'm going to ask you 50 questions. And the questions He asks are, where were you when all of this started? Where were you when others were watching me get this all up underway? And I ask myself, why does God introduce this? Lots of things God could have said. Well, Job, let's talk about your kids.

Here's why I picked off number three. Here's why I had the house fall on number four. And you know that number five, he never was any good.

He was kind of in between. I mean, God doesn't talk about the family. He doesn't say, well, you know, the Sabians were short on camels or whatever.

You know, here's why these different ones came and stole. Nothing to do with this problem. We typically think, when I have a problem, I want somebody to talk to me about my problem.

I don't want to be talking about almost literally how many angels were dancing when the foundation of the world was laid. So why does God bring this up? Well, interestingly, it's not the

only place in the Bible where when you're facing adversity, you're encouraged to think about the angelic hosts and specifically the angelic opposition. This book began by detailing angelic opposition to Job.

One angel, one human. The lead angel against the preeminent righteous man in the earth. And it's a model.

It's a paradigm. Well, what do we have in the New Testament? Our memory verses right now. What's in our memory verses out of Ephesians chapter 6? We do not wrestle.

Ephesians 6.12 Our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against what? Now, we know this verse. We've been memorizing it. We've been saying it Sunday after Sunday.

What does this really mean? We can memorize it. We can talk about it. Oh yeah, powers of the air.

What does it mean? It means something because God brought it up in one of the earliest stories of history outside of the Genesis account is Job. And this is the theme. This is the major thing of Job.

It begins with it and ends with it. Dark angel opposition to people trying to please God in their life. And the Ephesian letter, probably wrongly named, it may have gone to Ephesus, but went to a lot of other places as well.

It is probably the Laodicean letter. Nevertheless, one of the letters that Paul writes says the very same thing. We wrestle not against.

Now, if you've got a whole book of the Old Testament devoted to this subject, and you've got major parts of the New Testament devoted to this subject, because it's not just here in Ephesians 6 as you well know, where is the balance point? We don't want to be going off and buying every book on angels, but on the other hand, we don't want to be oblivious to the opposition. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Now, I'm sorry, but my problems come to me in flesh and blood terms.

That's how I see them. It's people. I've had people get mad at me.

I've had people ream me out. I've had patty nose when I was in the reserves. You know, I'm an artillery guy.

That's what I do. I can compute, even in my sleep today, the manual gunnery solution for a hundred different kinds of situations having to do with a 155 millimeter howitzer firing the M1A1, firing an HE projectile, time fuse, VT fuse. There's all kinds of things I can do.

But I got called in and absolutely screamed at by a colonel in the Marine Corps because he lost

his admin officer, and he said, oh, you're going to be the admin officer. And I went in there and things had lain fallow for a year and a half, and I wasn't making enough progress in the S1 to suit him. And so, drill after drill, I got paid to go in and sit and listen to myself be excoriated and have everything in the book thrown at me.

Well, I didn't see any angels. I didn't see any foundation of the world. All I saw was, here's a flesh and blood guy giving me grief, to put it mildly.

And I had to put up with that for many months. And, of course, once a month. I mean, you can put up with anything once a month, and you still get your drill checked no matter what they say.

And, well, keep on talking, sir. You know, the longer you talk, the less I'm able to work on those books in there. But, hey, you know, if it makes you feel good, you're the colonel.

I'm the captain. So, you know, fire when ready, Gridley. But the situation is that our problems come to us in pretty material, concrete terms, often conveyed to us through people, flesh and blood.

This is why Paul says, look, broaden your perspective a little bit. Don't think that because you get hit in the face with a glove that the glove is the real force here. This is the iron fist inside the soft glove.

It's the fist you need to worry about, not the glove. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Isn't this what God is saying to Job? Look, there are bigger things going on.

There are sons of God up there. He doesn't just bring this up because it's a nice poetic thing to throw in in the middle of the foundation of the earth. We are supposed to remember.

Now, I try to think back what went on today. I didn't have very many big problems today. I think about the past week.

We had to cancel class on Tuesday. I had a real flesh and blood problem on Tuesday. My own flesh and blood rose up and attacked me.

And I couldn't even do Bible class. Well, you know, typically we separate in our minds and our spiritual life and our understanding of God and the Word of God and the eternal things tends to kind of drift over into a box that we take off the shelf for Bible class and then we put away, along with our Bibles and our notes, and now I'm back in real life and here's the flesh and blood world. And more than anything else, in the book of Job, we are being encouraged, just as Israel was encouraged, just as God is encouraging Job, to integrate spiritual truth into daily life.

Our warfare, our wrestling, is not against flesh and blood. Any rank unbeliever can look at life that way and think that person is my problem, this situation is my problem, and I need to find a personal or material sort of solution. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of what? The darkness of this age.

This is the troubled sea that God has put behind bars and doors and limits and said to the proud waves, you can go this far and no farther. What happened in chapter 1 and chapter 2? Satan says, well, let's do thus and so to Job. And God says, you can go what? Thus far and no farther.

You can touch his flesh, but you cannot take his life. This is circling back. God is completing the circle, completing the thought, completing the objective of this book.

And so, it's such a shame to me, if you look at a commentary and they say, well, God is humbling Job and saying, Job, why are you asking questions? As though his problems are not in view or as though the theme of the book is not being brought to the fore here. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Now, here's the bottom line.

We know this. You've heard me say it. You believe it.

Yeah, there's angels. There's demons. Hard times.

Yes, I should remember this. Okay, fine. Well, like a lot of other things that you hear in church, sounds good right now, but day after tomorrow, here comes a problem and none of us are going to remember.

We're going to be right in the middle of it. And the question comes, how do you do this? How do you integrate spiritual life into daily existence? How do you remember to put on the whole armor of God? How do you remember that this is not a flesh and blood deal? This is a principalities and power deal. I've told you this before.

I got so sick in church of people telling me what to do and never telling me how to do it. And I've tried my best to not be guilty of that same thing and produce this wonderful filigree picture of how life ought to be. And then we all walk out saying, well, that sounds good, but I live in the real world, buddy, so where's the how? Where does the rubber meet the road? Well, in my understanding of the book of Job, this is it.

Look at what God does. God is giving Job the model. And He says, look, ask yourself some questions.

We tend to look around and want to ask somebody else some questions. Remember Job? If I could talk to the Almighty, I would ask Him some questions. Because I've got some questions.

I have got an issue with the way my life is going here. God seems far away. I got hung with a bunch of stuff that I didn't deserve and that I didn't bring upon myself.

I want to talk to somebody and find out what's going on. I want some answers. I want to ask some questions and get some answers.

What does God say? Ask yourself some questions. Is life and human history all about you? I can ask myself the next time I start getting wrapped around the axle on something. Somebody's screaming at me.

Somebody's unhappy with me. I have gotten myself into some kind of a fix. Was I there when God laid the foundations of the earth? Was I on hand? Did I command the morning to drive darkness into its place? This is another way of talking about those limits and those bars and doors and gates that keep the sea in its place.

God commands the morning and it drives the darkness into its place. And those who have been hiding in the darkness wind up getting exposed. It's just like rolling a cylinder seal across the clay.

They might have been hiding in the cracks, but once you roll it across, there they are in bas-relief right there in the clay. It's like that thing, As the World Turns. As the world turns, all this stuff inevitably, what goes around comes around.

What's been in the darkness is now in the light. The thing that you did in secret is now shouting from the housetop and so on. So, again, if I start thinking and asking myself the questions God is asking Job, was the founding of the world all about me? Was God saying, you know, I need to get this universe lined up because Sam's on the way? I need to get these bars and doors.

I need to get the angels corralled. I need to get the operation of the weather and the climate and the rotation of the earth and the solar system. I've got to get that because Sam's on the way.

Hey, Sam's going to be living a life here one of these days. Better get that earth straightened out. It is humbling in the sense that the commentaries like to suggest, but what is the application? What are we supposed to bring away from this? The key to objectivity is recognizing our place in God's plan.

We are not the center of the universe. It's a shocking and disappointing realization. But this is basically what God is suggesting to Job.

If you ask yourself some pertinent questions, guess what? I didn't say I need to get Job over here to watch this. I need to get Job here when I lay the foundation of the earth so he understands it. Isn't it interesting, and we've talked about this in our Genesis study, why wasn't man created in time to see God do all of the other acts of creation? Adam has to take it on faith because he didn't see the sea bring forth stuff after its kind and the seed bearing herb and the land bring forth all kinds of animals and behemoths and creeping things.

By the time Adam arrives, it's a done deal. He didn't see any of it. Adam is the first man, and he's just like Job.

God could have said to Adam, Sorry, but you weren't around when I did all this previous stuff. So

what's the logical suggestion? Could God have created Adam on the first day? He created light on the first day. And you don't have the sun and the moon given their orders until the fourth day.

Why is man last, and why doesn't he see all these previous things? Unlike the angels, unlike the creation that watched God do all these things, man has to take it on faith. Man has to believe from the outset what God says that he can't observe, that he cannot empirically verify. In the same way, Job is saying, God, I want some answers.

I want some demonstration. If I've done wrong and I'm being punished for it, I want somebody to trot out the evidence. He's like from Missouri before there ever was a United States.

Show me how this is just. And God essentially is saying, Look, the reason I did all this stuff before you came along, where were you when I laid the foundation, is that your reason for being is to operate on faith. You're supposed to not understand it.

You're supposed to not have seen it. You're supposed to be listening to what I'm saying and believing it. That's your job.

That's why I created you, is essentially what God is saying. You weren't there when I fixed the limits for these who made a decision, who fell and who were corralled and limited in darkness and shrouded in clouds before you came along. God says, in any of your days, have you been able to command light to drive out darkness? That's not your function.

That's not your ability. That's not your job. Taking hold of the ends of the earth and shaking the wicked out of it, taking on form like clay under a seal, standing out like a garment, from the wicked their light is withheld and the upraised arm is broken.

This refers back. Do you remember Elihu talking about what people do in the night and in the dark? There is a reason for the darkness. Do you seek your maker? Do you look for the one who can provide a song in the night? A song in the night? God lays the foundation and says, let there be light and all the sons of the morning sing a song.

They shout for joy at the founding of the world. Men who didn't get to see that are supposed to be looking for that song. Where is the Lord my maker? The one who gives me a song in the night.

Because I wasn't there to see the things that would generate a song. Elihu wasn't wasting his breath talking about these things. From the wicked their light is withheld.

Their arm, upraised, is broken. Trying to fend off the light, trying to not be shaken out of the darkness, it's broken. There are two kinds of people.

There are those who love darkness rather than light. And there are those who welcome the light. There are those who seek their creator.

God is light and in him is no darkness at all. And there are those who raise their arm to fend him off, as it were. This is the picture of somebody shielding their eyes from the rays of the sun because they've been operating in the darkness.

Now he begins a new set of metaphors. I want to just point something out. Remember the first section about the foundation of the earth? And then there was a reference to the angels.

Then there was a second set talking about the morning and the driving out of the darkness. And now we have a second reference to sentient creatures. Men who raise up their arms and have them broken when they're trying to shield the light.

In the first instance, God is doing a work of creation. You have the sons of God. And then you have those fallen ones, the dark ones that form the sea and have to be barred in and have the doors put around them.

Now you have the wicked on the earth who are hiding from the light and raising their arms against the light. So do you see the parallel in a description of creation followed by a sentient creature reaction? God is laying the foundations and here's the sons of God and their response. Here's some more of the evidence of God's creation.

This is not new creation now. This is the daily reiteration of God's functional plan. Every day the sun rises.

Every day the darkness is rolled up like a blanket. Every day the morning is commanded to drive the darkness away. And these little humans, evil ones, who are trying to hide in the darkness, are shaken out, raise their arms, only to have those arms knocked down and broken.

Well now, phase three of this cyclical sort of description. Have you entered the springs of the sea or have you walked in search of the depths? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you seen the gates of the shadow of death? Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Tell me if you know all this. Once again, when you see the sea, you want to think, hmm, what are we talking about here? This is the uncontrollable, too powerful for me to manage forces.

And as soon as he says, have you entered into the springs of the sea, have you walked in search of the depths, this is a place where no man can go. I mean, they didn't have diving bells, they didn't have deep sea suits, they didn't have remote piloted submarines and so on. Have you walked in search of the depths? And what is associated with this? The gates of death, the doors of the shadow of death.

Remember what Jonah says when he's praying as he gets cast off the ship and he's swallowed by the great fish, and he says, this seaweed wrapped around my head and I was taken down to the gates of Sheol, down to the gates of death, to the doors of the shadow of death. This is God's knowledge and God's control and access to these dark forces. Not only has he hemmed them in,

it's kind of like if you pin in a lion and you say, well, I've got him in a cage and I'm safe as long as I'm outside.

God says, look, I can go right into the depths. I can go down to the lair. I can go down to the throne, to the gates.

Gates speak of the place of judgment. Job sat in the city gates and rendered judgments. These are the seats of power, the seats of influence, the seats of decision making and policy making of death and darkness.

God is not just corralling in this thing and saying, well, I can externally bottle it. He says, unlike you, I can enter into the very depths. I can go to the very heart of this thing.

Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Have you considered the vast expanse of the earth? How much of the earth's surface is covered with water? Most. I forget the exact percentage, but it's something like 80% of the earth's surface is water. Even in these days, before they knew the map of the earth, they knew that you can't go very far before you hit the Mediterranean.

You can't go very far before you hit the edges of the known world. Matthew was making some reference to rune stones and ancient Norsemen and people who did exploration. You remember the whole Vinland thing and how the guys supposedly came to America long before Columbus and sailed up the Mississippi River and carved stuff in rocks that has been found in Oklahoma from way back.

They think maybe as early as 600, 700 AD. There were people in Oklahoma carving stuff into rocks and they've been found up in the Kerr Museum. We've seen them.

We had a whole family reunion up there at the Kerr Mansion and looked at those rune stones. Well, those guys sailed into the unknown where later sailors were afraid to go because it was over the horizon. They made it all the way to North America.

They made it all the way around Florida. They went up the Mississippi in 600, 700 AD and went up the Arkansas and got out in, of all places, Oklahoma, shooed away whoever was living there. The guy carved a thing in the stone.

As near as they can figure out, it says, this is my valley. I claim it for me. His name was Mog or something.

He said, this is Mog's Valley. Sailing into the unknown, have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? For centuries and centuries, man didn't even know how big the earth was it was so big in terms of the ability to explore. Well, what is this again? Where does the rubber hit the road here when we're trying to navigate through our day and we're trying to remember that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers? He says, have you

comprehended the breadth of the earth? The plan of God and what God is doing is big.

If you ever delve into science and you look at genetics and the history that evolutionists like to portray and talk about, look, here's the branching of the tree of life and here's where we separated from the sea urchin and look how his DNA is like ours and so on. I mean, it's legitimate. There's duplicate sections of DNA that you can find in a mollusk and you can find in us.

And they say, well, now see, if you measure how many mutations and blah, blah, blah, where it all came from the muck. Well, regardless of how you view that, it's incredibly complex. They can't even get computers to solve chess, which is 32 pieces on a 64-square board operating according to rules.

How are they going to ever model how the human genome evolved from the muck? I mean, it would be great if they could. They could say, look, see, here's how it happened. You started out with guanine and cytosine and look, they linked here and then they duplicated and here's how it happened.

Just document the whole thing. It's huge. It was, how many did I say, like 3,000 person-years to document the functioning of what makes a fruit fly have spots on his body? 3,000 man-years to figure out why a little wrinkly winged fly has spots on it.

How are they ever going to figure these out? It's too big. God does this kind of stuff for kicks. It's in his spare time.

I mean, it's like, well, okay, all you angels, let's just have a little demonstration here. And he knocks off a universe like this. It's finger work.

The Bible says this is the work of his fingers. Salvation, by the way, is said in the Bible to be arm work. The arm of the Lord has saved us.

Our salvation was a lot harder than inventing the universe, coming up with DNA and a variety of biological life. But the thing is, however you want to look at it, have you comprehended just how big this thing is that God did? He is so far above what we can imagine. And this is why science just refuses even to consider the possibility, because it's too big for them.

They can't even conceive of it. What do you mean there's a sentient being outside the space-time universe, powerful enough to create the Big Bang, powerful enough to design DNA, powerful enough to do all that? Oh no, that's a fairytale. That's nonsense.

I can't put it into scale. Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? When you think about these things, Pastor, some of us used to listen to, used to talk about, what is your rationale when you're under pressure? And he said, well, there are different rationales that you can run through

your mind to try to stabilize yourself and be objective. One of them is the plan of God rationale.

God has a plan. It has a purpose. It has a continual sequence of things that need to take place.

So put your problem in the perspective of God's plan. There is the character of God rationale. What is he like? Well, here's a rationale.

Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Do you realize that God is in control of all of the dark forces? Even you think, well, you know, the people in my workplace, the people in my family, the people in my... You know, the elements of this situation are way too big. It's too powerful. It's too much.

Nobody can fix this problem. God says, look, have you entered the springs of the sea? Have you walked in the depths? Have you gone to the gates of the shadow of death? The implication is, God says, I have. I do.

It's not a problem for me. And how real is that to us? That God has absolutely not only limited what the forces of darkness can do, has said your proud ways can go this far and no farther, but he has entered into the very heart of it, into their counsels, into the purposes of Satan. And he knows exactly what Satan's purpose is.

And he sets the limits and the bounds. Where is the way to the dwelling of light and darkness? Where is its place? This parallels the bokor and the shakar that we saw earlier. It's not morning and dawn.

It's morning and darkness. And once again, dwelling of light, darkness. Where is its place? This time, in verse 19, the word for darkness is koshek.

This goes back again to the first day of creation. God said, let there be light. And there was light.

The darkness didn't comprehend it. John says in his first chapter, Where is the way to the dwelling of light and darkness? Where is its place? That you may take it to its territory. That you may know the paths to its home.

You see how this ties back to God saying, Look, you don't even know where the boundaries are, much less establishing them yourself. You don't know where its home is. I've been to the gates of hell.

The gates of the shadow of death. Do you know it because you were born then or because the number of your days is great? And of course, you don't. Have you entered the treasury of snow or have you seen the treasury of hail? Now, first of all, God talked about the foundation of the world, about the earth in general.

Then he talked about the daily sequence of light and darkness. Now he's talking about the

weather. And we've come back to what Elihu talked about in terms of the rain and the drops being sucked up and raining back down.

Have you entered the treasury of snow or have you seen the treasury of hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? By what way is light diffused? And this is again lightning like we saw Elihu talking about. And what is the east wind scattered over the earth? What's the nature of the east wind where Job dwells? A westerly wind blowing across the Mediterranean brings coolness and moisture. The east wind is the hot, dry wind that has traveled all the way across the Arabian desert.

It is the withering wind. That's what's going to kill Jonah's little shade thing. Well, of course, the worm gets it.

But the east wind comes in and shrivels their crops. Snow and hail were odd in this part of the world. They're not frequent.

It's highly unusual. It's a freak storm. Just like Job's situation is sort of a freakish problem.

He's gone for years and years, raised all of his adult children without ever having something like this happen. Have you entered in the treasury? Have you seen the snow and the hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, in the day of war and battle? What's he talking about here? War and battle against whom? What has snow and hail got to do with human warfare and human battle? Well, not much. But these strange occurrences, these unusual manifestations of weather, harken to higher and greater things.

If you have a freak occurrence in your life, it's probably not mundane. It probably has to do with God's plan and purpose, the warfare that we engage in that is invisible. This is a day of battle and war.

By what is the lightning dispersed or the east winds scattered over the earth? These are extremes. Extremes of storm versus dry hot wind. Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water or a path for the thunderbolt to cause it to rain on a land where there is no one, a wilderness in which there is no man, to satisfy this desolate waste, this devastated land, and to cause it to sprout with vegetation? Once again, extremes.

You have a place where there aren't even any people. What is the purpose of rain in a place where there are no people? It's inscrutable. It doesn't make any sense to the human mind.

Why would God waste time raining on a desolate place when here there are people who need rain and they're not getting any? It's inscrutable. It doesn't make sense from a human point of view. Does the rain have a father? Who has begotten the drops of dew? You get very close to the things Elihu was talking about earlier.

From whose womb comes the ice and the frost of heaven who gives it birth? He's back to that

snow and hail. He's basically saying, the commonplaces of the sun rising and setting and the darkness and the light, you can't figure that out. You're sure not going to get snow, hail, rain in desolate places and hot east winds in populated places.

If you can't figure out the commonplaces, you're not going to have any clue whatsoever of the strange occurrences. Water hardens like a stone and the surface of the deep is frozen. Of course, this was very mysterious to people in the ancient world.

So, he has canvassed the physical realm. But what did he start with? He started with the foundation of the earth in space and the stars observing it. And now when you get to verse 31, he's back to the stars.

Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades or release the belt of Orion? Can you bring out the Mazarot in its seasons? If you look at that word, you can tell it's a Hebrew word and it's a plural, right? Mazarot. And this, as near as we can tell, is a reference to the constellations. And in our study of the camp of Israel and the four directions and where each of the tribes were camped and what their banners had on them and so on, this is a reference to the 12 constellations.

Can you bring out the constellations in their season? They're visible in some seasons and not others. Those that are at the rim of the horizon. And this is what your signs of the zodiac are based on, is the things that appear at different seasons.

Or can you guide the bear with its cubs? And this is the constellation of the bear. This is back to Arcturus. Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set up their dominion over the earth? Now, this is fascinating.

These stars, and not just individual stars, but groups of stars, teams of stars, companies of stars, have been given dominion over the earth. And you can see the literal, as this knowledge got corrupted and people got a mystical sense that the actual stars had some influence over what goes on on the earth. The roots of astrology, which are centuries and centuries and centuries old, reflect a corrupted knowledge of this relationship.

Stars are metaphors for sentient, angelic creation. And angels have been assigned dominions on the earth. It's a fact.

Get used to it. There are angels, and not just individuals, but groups of angels. And you say, well, of course, Daniel, the prince of Persia, you've got the angels in Revelation holding the four winds.

There are different dominions. There are different areas where angels are superintending and supervising. And if we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers, well, what do you mean? Principality, power, and ruler, and these forces of darkness.

What's a principality? What's a power? They have got dominion. Satan is called the prince of the

power of the air. He is the ruler of this world.

Jesus Christ called Satan the ruler of this world. But in practice, we don't think in those terms, do we? We think, well, Satan is, you know, out to mess up my life and make me unhappy. But we don't really think of him in terms of what kind of rulership has he got? Well, darkness is the realm where evil is practiced.

Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Satan provides them rationales, justifications, safe harbors, tries to set them up in godless civilizations and godless systems and godless societies of various kinds and ways. It is a power.

It's not just a policy. It's not just an effort that he's making to overturn God's plan and purpose. He's got power.

He is the ruler, and he has got sub-rulers. So it should not surprise us. Have you ever seen or heard people talk about, oh, there's a conspiracy, there's a global conspiracy to, you know, Matthew and I are familiar with a guy who's ranting on about how government is everybody's worst enemy and that everybody ought to be an anarchist.

He wrote a paper called Jesus Was an Anarchist. And he tries to justify this on the Bible, that, you know, government is bad and all of these people are getting in. You know, there's been conspiracy theories all down through history where people are getting together, you know, look on your dollar, look at the eye on top of the pyramid, and the whole, you know, same thing in this Da Vinci Code.

You know, conspiracy after conspiracy. Listen, the conspiracy is not human. The conspiracy and the power structure is principalities and powers and rulers.

Yes, there is a conspiracy. Yes, there is a concerted, organized force of darkness at work, but it is angelic. It's not flesh and blood.

But people dumb this down and so they believe in astrology instead of angelic influence. And they believe in human conspiracies instead of a satanic domination of the world. So when God directs Job's attention to this, what is he doing? He says, look, there are forces at work here beyond your control.

When Satan asks if he can mess up your life, when Satan asks if he can touch your flesh, I have the power to allow it or not allow it. It's all... I can bind... Whenever he asks these questions, God is basically saying, you can't, but I can. Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades? Can you loose the belt of Orion? The Pleiades are not a particularly bright set of stars, but the belt of Orion is one of the brightest deals in the heavens still.

So, can you bind the dark stars? Can you loose the bright stars? Is sort of the implication here. Can you bring out each of these different things and let it have its day? Let it try its hand? You've

got the constellations cycling through. Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set up their dominion over the earth? The answer is, no, Job, you can't.

Yes, I, God, can. Can you lift up your voice to the clouds that an abundance of water may cover you? Can you send out lightnings that they may go and say to you, here we are. I mean, you know, it is to laugh.

Well, again, what is the practical... God is saying this to a poor guy sitting on a pile of ashes, scraping himself with a pot shirt after 35 chapters of dialogue. What does this mean to Job? What is Job supposed to do with it? And by extension, what are we supposed to do with it? We have to learn to ask ourselves these questions when we're struggling, when we are forgetting who we are and why we're here. God has a plan and God has a purpose.

God has everything in control. If He is directing the lightning, if He is setting the ordinances of the heavens, if He is controlling the stars and He's got the sea barred in behind a door and He can go to its very heart and operate in the shadow of death, we have nothing to fear from the darkness because God has got it controlled to the extent that it makes an incursion on us. God has got it handled.

And the question for us is, are we going to be frightened by the darkness and start trying to ask a bunch of questions of God or are we going to trust that God has a purpose, that God knows what He's doing and look for the song that we're supposed to be singing in the night? The stars of heaven sang together when God set up this experiment. Can we sing during the experiment and praise God that He has chosen to demonstrate His power in us? What does Paul say? God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. He has chosen the weak things to make His power manifest.

We're the weak thing. Here are all of these angels with all of their power and in that ironic twist that is so characteristic of God's plan and purpose, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God has ordained strength. In Psalm 8, we look up into the heavens.

What is man? What is the Son of Man? Well, God has raised Him up above the stars and has crowned Him with glory and honor. This is our opportunity, but to seize that opportunity, we have to recognize it and we have to let God ask us these questions and put our situation in perspective. So it's much more than a recounting of God's power.

It is a rationale for coping with stress. That's what these questions are designed to give Job and to give us. Well, we've made reasonably good progress through chapter 38.

We'll pick up here in the midst of the clouds next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the perspective that it gives to us.

Thank You for the insight that it gives us that we can certainly not gain through empiricism or

through the findings of science. You have given us information about unseen things, about realms to which we have no physical access, and yet the knowledge is essential for us to fulfill our purpose in Your plan. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths in our hearts.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.