

28b JOB

Let's pick up our study now in Job 39. We have come to this last section where God is speaking of the eagle. These different sorts of people, different sorts of influences with which we have to deal, have culminated now in the eagle.

And unlike the predator, which can be guarded against in some fashion, you can have warning in African villages. They keep dogs around to warn them of the approach of a lion. You can obviously put up shelters and fend yourself off from animals like that.

The problem of the wild ox and the wild donkey is not physical danger, but it's unmanageability. They ought to be useful and they're not. You think about the ostrich and its lack of loyalty because of its pride and its instinct for self-preservation.

The cavalry horse, it's so interested in conflict, it doesn't know when to stop. All it can think about is the use of weapons in conflict. And many times you have to meet force with force.

An army that has cavalry must be opposed by another army that has cavalry or you're going to be in real trouble. But now we come to these hawks and eagles and God asks the question and he says, the ability to fly and migrate far away out of sight and return later, is that your wisdom or does that, you know, where does that wisdom come from? Is it by your wisdom that the hawk migrates south and it's gone for a period of time and then it returns and so the implication above and beyond all of these things and if you read a popular commentary, it's going to say, look at God's control of nature, look at how God has provided and he's orchestrated everything and all of these things are true. And in the first blush of looking at these passages, that's absolutely true.

Look at the wonder of what God has done in creation. But at the same time, there is a more profound message involved here and when you look at the birds and you think of their biblical symbolic value, they generally represent either the forces of darkness, the demons, principalities, powers, rulers of the air, it's no accident that they're up in the air but they're not as high as the stars anymore, they have fallen from heaven but they're still more powerful than groundlings and so they are now the birds and they still have a lot of this ability to navigate, they will disappear for a while and seem to be gone and then they return. So these hawks are seasonal, they're here for a while and then they're gone and there is a season when you'll be victimized by these birds and then there's a season where they're out of the way.

Others are there all the time and they make their home in the cleft of the rock and they're inaccessible. You can't get to them, you can't kill their young, you can't exterminate them, they're too high, they're beyond and they can swoop down at will and they're pretty much omnipresent and the fact that they can look down and see things suggests their greater knowledge and greater ability to spot prey and spot weaknesses that you might be unaware of on the ground because they've got that bird's eye view. Well, we talked about the word for hawk and how it

refers to the idea of hovering and soaring, even circling.

The word for eagle is the word nasher, N-E or N-A-S-H-E-R depending on where you find it here, it's nasher. And this comes from the verb that means to rip apart. I know you thought I was using my imagination when I was talking about that red meat being picked out but that's what the verb, that's what the word eagle comes from.

In the same way that the word for hawk means to fly and soar, fly away and come back later, the word for eagle means to rip with the beak. You look it up in the lexicon, that's what it means, to rip or tear with the beak. And it's almost always translated eagle throughout the Bible.

If you check your ISBI, check a good Bible encyclopedia, it'll tell you that there were many different species of birds that are generally referred to under this label in the ancient Near East. Large birds, carrion eaters that were attracted often by the leftovers from sacrifice. You can imagine all of the awful, O-F-F-A-L that was left over after animal sacrifice, the entrails and things that were not a part of the sacrifice, the head and the legs and the various parts were not always a part and they were taken outside the camp.

Well, this was just feeding time for the carrion birds outside the camp. But there's one distinction and this is pointed out in ISBI, eagles never flock. They say birds of a feather flock together.

Well, eagles don't flock. You don't find flocks of eagles. They look for height and they are solitary except for their mate, but they'll be in the very top of a tree, they'll be on the highest available crag.

They look for the highest elevation, they get as far from the ground as they can and they live in pairs. These pairs will establish a territory and that's the only pair that you'll find in that territory. Vultures, on the other hand, do flock and if you've seen any African vultures documentaries, you've seen these gnarly, moldy, mangy looking birds out there picking at the old carcasses and so on.

So, when it says where the carcass is, there the eagles will gather, this is going to be your vulture brand of eagle. And when I say eagle, I'm talking about the Nez-Serre idea. There were three different kinds of eagle, four or five falcons, three different kinds of vultures, but in almost every biblical reference, it's eagle, that's what it'll say.

So, even when the text makes it clear that it's not going to be an eagle, it's going to say that in your English text because we just don't have a more generic term. It would be nice if they translated carrion bird or bird of prey or sharp-beaked, high-flying bird of some kind. But they just didn't have the technical distinctions because these were not birds that people dealt with every day.

It came down and took away my lamb, whatever it was. They didn't really get scientific about it. So, the golden eagle, which is in your King James, you'll often see it translated osprey.

There's a tawny eagle, there's an imperial eagle, and you can look it up in the encyclopedia and see this. The point here is they dwell up in the rocks, on the crag of the rock and the stronghold. And their eyes observe from afar, their young ones suck up blood.

The products of a violent death are taken to the young ones. Now, as far as we know, demons don't have young ones. So, when it talks about birds having young ones, this is really more an allusion to the type of people who are associated with those dark forces.

And there are people who, and I'm not trying to be all wild-eyed or anything, I don't think there's a lot of actual contact in terms of verbal communication and fellowship with demons. But there are people who place themselves under the influence of forces of darkness by their choices. Things that you do to your mind through drugs, through meditation, through Eastern mysticism, through various other things where you court and cultivate the occult.

You consciously leave the light and head for the darkness. Those people are kind of a special case. More generally, you're going to have people who, in their priorities, in their values and in their general thinking, adopt satanic thinking, adopt the doctrine of demons, adopt the worldly, secular, materialist viewpoint.

And to the extent that they train up their mind and establish a worldview that is the satanic worldview, to that extent, they're going to be a cog in the big machine. And Satan loves that. And his, you know, I think it's very seldom that any of us are going to be dealing with Satan personally, if ever.

I would expect that if he has any direct intervention, he's going to be in a capital somewhere. It's going to be some 17th rank sub-demon, the Bureau of Aggravation or something. He's going to send some low-level demon out to try to throw us off track and to distract us, especially if you begin to shine like a light in a dark place.

Because believers who are asking and seeking and knocking, trying to walk that narrow road are relatively few and far between. There's thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, but not as many as there ought to be. And as we make spiritual progress, we will occasionally skyline ourselves in such a way that our warfare will be against principalities and powers and rulers in a more direct way.

Now, the reason I'm belaboring this point is there is a strong and prevalent type of teaching going around in Christian circles today. It's not restricted to the charismatic side of the house. It says that when you feel like you are under Satanic oppression or demon oppression or whatever, that you should directly address it.

And they'll go to Ephesians 6 and they'll go to some of the other passages and say, you should get together and invoke the name of Jesus, bind Satan, all of this kind of thing. Look at this passage. These are eagles and hawks.

They are up in the rock. They are not, and God has established it this way, they're not accessible to human strength. If you try to use these human viewpoint sorts of ploys, you're just going to get your eyes picked out and your blood is going to be sucked up by their young ones, their proteges, their up-and-coming human associates.

They congregate where the weak are. They're going to be down there taking advantage of the weak. How do you properly address this sort of opposition, this kind of person slash demonic opposition? Well, they don't attack the strong, they attack the weak, all predators.

You look at the lions out in the vilt, you look at the leopards and the cheetahs and the hyenas and all of the other predatory or advantage-taking types of animals. What do they do? They wait for a straggler, they wait for somebody to come up the lane, they wait for someone to be weak, to be staggering, to be left behind, to be too young to defend themselves, and that's their victim. Why go through a lot of dangerous conflict trying to wrestle down some prey when you've got an easier mark somewhere else? So the key in looking at this type of people and this type of opposition is to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God. He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High abides under the shadow of the Almighty. And you're not going to be getting picked over by the carrion birds if you have your position where it should be, if you're drawing your strength from where it should be drawn.

So, interestingly though, the emphasis here is that this is God's design. When God cast Satan and the fallen angels out of heaven, he didn't cast them into the Alpha Centauri region of space. He cast them to Earth.

They are here co-located with man. How many stars, how many constellations, how many, not constellations, how many galaxies full of how many planets, how many different places in the universe could God have sent the fallen angels? Of all the gin joints, why did he send them here? One planet with humanity on it, and this is where he sent the demons. It's just, you think, Lord, what were you thinking? Couldn't you have put them on the moon or someplace other than here? Well, it is at God's command.

It is by God's wisdom that they are here. They are a defeated enemy after the cross, and my favorite analogy, which you've heard me give many times, it is just like a vaccination. It's just like an inoculation with a dead, defeated leftovers of an enemy, and your body sees that, identifies it, and builds up strength and antibodies against it, and you are never going to be susceptible to the real thing because you have been exposed to the defeated version and have gained strength and have learned to recognize it and to counteract it in that contact, and that's what God is doing with us.

That's why it is by his wisdom and at his command that these eagles and other predatory types

are among us, not just the demon versions, but the people who act just like them because it's the same kind of thinking. It's the same kind of volition. Angelic thinking and our thinking are not that different.

All sentient creatures are made in God's image, so there are predatory people. There are carcass-picking people who will take advantage of the weak. A pastor I used to listen to had a whole series called The Arrogant and the Inadequate, and how these would form, now they call it codependency.

You have a strong central figure and you have a weak dependent figure that circles them like a moon around the planet, and this can form an unhealthy kind of relationship, and these predatory types will come in and take advantage. That's what's being spoken of here. So, why then does the scripture have so much to say about eagles? We have positive images and negative images of them.

If you mount up with wings as eagles, that's a good thing, right? But that's a picture of its strength, and you often times, I mean, lions are a predatory dangerous animal, and yet the Lord Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah. David, when eulogizing Saul and Jonathan, after he found out that they had been killed after seeing the Witch of Endor and all that, slain on the slopes of Mount Gilboa, in his tragedy song there, in his eulogy song, he said, Saul and Jonathan were mighty warriors and they were stronger than lions, they were swifter than eagles. This is from the viewpoint of the enemy.

The enemy dreaded them, the enemy feared them because they were great warriors. This was David's view. And so, when the Bible talks about us mounting up with wings as eagles, now we become the danger to the forces of darkness.

We become those who are the threat. And, you know, it's kind of like they tell people in their early days of judo or boxing or whatever, I'm going to teach you these skills and you're going to be dangerous. And you want to be dangerous if you're going to be a warrior.

If you're going to go on the offense instead of the defense, you want people to consider you dangerous. So that's the idea and that's why you sometimes see these sort of negative images also used in a positive sense. What is the reaction that these things invoke? The enemy should be afraid when we start mounting up with wings like eagles.

When our strength is renewed, that puts the enemy to flight. And God says over and over to Israel, you know, when you're doing what you're supposed to, one of you will put to flight a thousand. You'll be scary when you're strong and when you're healthy and when you're trusting in God.

That's the idea here. So now in chapter 40, the Lord answers Job and says, shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it. This is a little bit

strong and it's an interpretive translation.

Let me give you my fairly literal rendering of this from Hebrew. Because remember, it doesn't seem to me from what we've studied that Job is rebuking God. There's a difference in questioning and in wondering and in rebuking.

This literally, as I read the Hebrew, says, let the one contending with the Almighty give corrective instruction. The Hebrew construction is identical whether you're asking a question or giving a justive or cohortative force. You know, when you say, let us go, let's go, that's a cohortative.

You're saying, let's do something. It's not an imperative. It's not a command.

It's a, depending on the context, it's either a justive or a cohortative. You're encouraging an action to take place or you're suggesting that an action take place in fairly strong terms. And that and the question mode are identical in Hebrew.

So it's just as easy to translate this instead of shall the one who contends correct him to say after God has finished this rehearsal and in particular his sort of two tablets of the divine attributes in creation and the divine wisdom in orchestrating the animal creation and the nature of the obstacle that it poses for mankind, then God says now, whoever here is contending with the Almighty, he's basically saying have we got anybody here that's going to argue with what I've just said? Everybody with me so far is sort of the implication. If anybody wants to contend with the Almighty over what has just been said, let him, if I got any of that wrong, why correct me? That's the thrust of this when you just read right through it. God basically stops at this point and answers Job and says, let anyone contending with the Almighty feel free to give some corrective instruction at this point.

The word for correcting here, and you notice him as an italics in your English, this is the kind of instruction that a father gives a son, that a master gives a pupil or an apprentice. It is sometimes translated rebuke. Other times it is, the sense of it is corrective instruction.

It's not necessarily correction like you did that wrong. It's let me help you do it right. It has often a positive connotation.

But here, are you going to differ with what God, do you disagree? Contend means to disagree. Let the one who disagrees with what the Almighty has just said feel free to offer some correction. Is any of this not true basically? Then he reiterates in a second clause here, he says, let the one confronting God, if you want to confront God over any of this, why answer it? And again, the word here translated rebuke basically means to stand in front of someone.

If you're going to stand up, if you're going to raise your hand, it means confront. Rebuke is too negative a connotation. This word often occurs in a context where it just means confront.

I'm going to confront you. I'm going to stand in front of you and bring this issue up. So it is not

really an accusation because as we know, God is going to end up by saying, the only person that has gotten this right about me is Job.

And it wouldn't make sense for God to be chiding Job for rebuking him here and then turn around and say, well, Job is the only one that's spoken of me correctly. And I think that really helps us understand that the sense of the word here is confront. Now, why does God stop and say that at this point? For one, it's a structural marker.

It marks the end of your two tablets of five sections each. That's one. It's a good speech marker because God's going to start a new speech at this point.

Secondly, this is sort of like Selah in a psalm. This is a good place to stop and take stock and make application. Because if God is not wrong about this, and if we don't need to contend with him or confront him and try to give him some corrective instruction about what he has just said, which is sort of a, I think God says this with a slight smile, you know, do you have any problem with that? Feel free to speak up.

And of course, Job is going to say, shut my mouth and call me corn bone because I'm not saying a word. But the idea here is this is the time to stop and make your application, observation, interpretation, application. We have observed what God has said here.

We have interpreted it and seen that it goes a little bit deeper than just talking about the superficial observation of nature. It talks about the realities of what God has done, why he has put man on earth, the bounds that he has set around good and evil, the types of evil that he lets run loose, the kinds of people that we are going to encounter and that we can ourselves become if we don't operate in the word of God by faith. So now what? If God has this right, then how should we then live? What kind of people should we be? What kind of animals did God not talk about in that second section? He didn't mention any of the clean animals, did he? Those that are in the camp that can be verified to be good for work and good for food, good for service, good for furthering the work of God's people.

The Lord Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me. What kind of an animal takes a yoke? It's a domestic ox. I am the shepherd.

You are the sheep, Jesus says in so many words. What kind of an animal is a sheep? It's a clean, productive animal, productive in a lot of different ways. Fleece, milk, meat, offspring.

It's the real cash crop of the ancient agrarian world. So how do we know that we're out of that productive pattern? Well, you can see that when you start looking for others to hunt down, when you become the predator instead of the goat or the lamb or the deer there, which is a harmless animal and also a good animal that's good for food. You remember the criteria for being a clean animal? Has to split the hoof and chew the cud.

Rabbits are no good because they chew the cud, but they don't split the hoof. Swine are no good because they split the hoof and they don't chew the cud. Deer split the hoof and chew the cud.

So do goats and so on. So these clean animals in that last section there are presented sort of as prey for these predators. And what does God say elsewhere about wayward believers? They're biting and devouring one another.

The unfaithful shepherds that abuse the flock, the fat sheep that muddy the water and shoulder the needy sheep out of the way. Over and over again you see even in Corinthians where it talks about taking the Lord's supper unworthily. And what is that really talking about? We studied that here just this past spring.

It has nothing to do with are you thinking holy thoughts while you eat the cracker and drink the Kool-Aid. It has everything to do with how are you treating your fellow believers? What is your attitude toward those who are hungry, toward those who are needy? People elbowing up to the table and stuffing themselves. He says, don't you have food that you can eat at home? You ought to be looking out for one another because your fellow believer is the body of the Lord.

We are members of his body. And if you disrespect his body, and he uses that analogy. So when the Lord stops here and says, any questions? Did I get any part of that wrong? Do you want to talk back and tell me anything that's amiss there? It is time to recognize that this is the divine order.

There are going to be storms in the sky. There are going to be dark waters. There is going to be hail from time to time.

God will sometimes rain in the desert and parch the inhabited land. There will be predators roaming loose. There will be tragedies happen where the ostrich runs off and is young or slain.

And you can't do anything about it. There are all kinds of injustices and inequities, dangers, toils and snares in this life. And it is by God's design.

Are you going to question his wisdom or not? God set it up. God established the gates and bars. And to say to God, shame on you, God.

This unfair thing should not be happening to me to confront the Almighty in that fashion. Remember, this is what Job said he wanted to do back in chapter 9. If I could confront the Almighty, this is what I would say. God says, well, I sketched out the way I've laid out the world, both the external physical environment and the animals and so on.

So have you got any problem with that so far? That's where we are when Job responds here in verse 3. Job answered the Lord and said, look, I am vile. Hen is the first thing that Job says, H-E-N. And it basically means look or it's translated behold.

And then he says, Kaloti. It's from Kalal, Q-A-L-A-L. And this is a word that means light, thin, little, insignificant, inconsequential, something despised or disdained.

It is the low end of the spectrum word. I am nothing. I am, you know, kavod is the word for glory in the Old Testament and it means heavy.

Kavod is the word that means to be or grow heavy. And kavod, the glory, literally means to be fat, to be real heavy. That was a sign of wealth and prosperity was to just be enormous.

So it became the word for glory. Well, the opposite of glory, inglorious, that's this word. It means to be very light, belittled, insignificant, meaningless, small.

It's used in 1 Samuel 2.30 as contemptible. The Lord God of Israel says, I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before me forever. But now the Lord says, you remember who this is to in 1 Samuel 2, the house of Eli.

Now the Lord says, far be it from me. For those who honor me, I will honor. Those who despise me shall be what? Lightly esteemed.

It's this word, kalal, and it means will be contemptible, insignificant, have no weight. Those who honor me, I will honor. Those who kavod me, I will kavod, essentially.

Those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Things are either heavy or light. So that's what we have here.

Job says, Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer you? Ma ashivka. And this is not the word for answer that we've seen in the past that is used in Ecclesiastes.

It's an evil answer that God has given. Inyan or anah, it's not from that root. This is the word shuv.

And shuv, S-H-U-V, means to return. Return to me, God says to Israel over and over again, turn, return. So basically the idea here is, what am I going to turn back to you? Everything that you have said is true.

I can turn back none of it. I can't refute it. I can't reject it.

I can't turn any of it around. So what will I return back to you? He says, I am insignificant and I am in the receiving mode. I am not sending anything.

I am, you know how the baby monitor thing works. It's not like a walkie talkie because you only have one transmitter and one receiver. A receiver doesn't transmit.

The transmitter doesn't receive. It's a one-way thing. And that's what Job says here.

He says, I am nothing but a receiver at this point. I send nothing. I return nothing.

And this is a great attitude because God resists the proud, but God gives grace to the humble. What shall I return to you? He says, my hand I put to my mouth. Once I have spoken.

And interestingly, this is the PL stem of Dalar. It's a standard word for speak or say. But Job says, Ahat, once.

And then Dibruti here is the PL, perfect. And the PL is the intensive stem. And Job is basically saying, I spoke heatedly.

I spoke in the heat of the moment. I spoke in the PL stem, the intensive stem. I spoke once intensively.

But and now he does use Ana where we get Enyon and Ecclesiastes. But now I will not answer. He says, and twice, referring back to speaking intensively.

I spoke once and I will not answer. And twice, I spoke intensively. Doesn't even repeat the verb.

And he says, and I will cease. I will not add, actually. And the word here, when he says, I will proceed no further.

He says, Lo, Oseph. This is from the root that the name Joseph comes from. You remember why Rachel named her first son Joseph? Remember what she said? God will add.

Joseph means, I will add. And of course, the second son came along. Benjamin, Ben-Oni.

But here, Job says, I spoke once and I will not answer again, is implied. I spoke twice. But I will not add anything to it.

Well, this leaves the floor clear for the Lord to answer Job yet again out of the whirlwind. And to say the very same thing he said at the beginning, prepare yourself like a man. I will question you and you will answer me.

I will question you and you will answer me. Now, this is also an interesting turn of phrase because the verb here is not answer. It's no.

It's from Yadah. Have you got your Hebrew there, Matt? Do you see that very last word in verse seven? He says, prepare yourself. It says, Ezar-na, and that na is the mark of the imperative.

You prepare yourself like a man. Geber, Geber is a man in his might and in his strength. You know, get your armor on like a Geber.

And I will question you, Kalat-se-ka, I will question you and you shall answer me. And the very last word there is Hod-ia-ni. And basically, that's from Yadah.

You will know me. You will know me is what this says. I will question you and you will know me.

Now, this is a little bit different thing, isn't it? The idea here is, of course, they say, well, this means you will express your knowledge to me. But that's an interpretive translation. Gird yourself up like a man, your loins.

I will question you, sha'al, and you will know me. This is the point of the exercise. Why has Job gone through all of this ever since chapter one? When you hear God's questions, you're going to come to know him.

This is why God uses those questions so many times. And it's a great point to remember when we are under pressure, when we are facing the nature of life, which God has designed in his wisdom, he lets evil touch us so that we will listen to him. He teaches us by questions.

They call this now, you know, they have these Montessori schools and they have the Socratic method and one thing and another. They've got lots of different ways of teaching. But the most efficient and effective way of teaching is to ask questions, to bring someone along by finding the answers.

That's why kids get homework. And that's what God is doing with us. This life is our homework.

God asks us questions. What are you going to do now? When this enters your life, what's the answer? When the eagle swoops, when the lion roars, when the ostrich flees, when the battle armored horse comes charging in, now what? I will question you, you will know me. That is the major point of God's speech.

The purpose of the questions is to give us knowledge of God. To the extent that we can remember that, we are going to have a lot more peace in our trials and in our challenges, because we know that it has a goal and it has a purpose. Beyond preparation for some future test, the ultimate goal and the ultimate purpose is to know God.

What does John 14.6 say? I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father, but by me. There's no point in coming to the Father.

There's no point in going to Hebrews 10 and coming boldly before the throne of grace. If we don't know who we are approaching, if we don't know who lies at the end of that narrow way, who it is that we are going to meet beyond the straight gate. God wants us to know him, that the highest honor accorded to the Old Testament saints was friend of God.

Abraham is called the friend of God. David is a man after God's own heart. And it is difficult to face the challenges that we face, but God's purpose is to give us the knowledge of himself.

We have insight because of our unique environment in God's wisdom that even angels do not have. Well, this brings us to the threshold of God's next great speech, final great speech here in the remainder of chapter 40. And that's where we'll pick up next time.

Father, thank you for this opportunity to endeavor to know you better through the study of your word and through its application in our daily lives. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these truths on our hearts and enable us to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight, glorifying to our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name.

Amen.