

**April 5**

**Scriptures:** Read Job 39 & 40

**Key Verse:** “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it.” (Job 40:2)

### **Overview**

Just as Job was shown to be powerless over nature, so also God made him face the realization of his weakness in controlling animals. Mankind was given dominion over the earth as God’s crown of creation, but this was in a very limited sense. As God affirmed, only He has ultimate control over the universe and the natural elements, as well as being sovereign over all creatures, including the animals (chapter 39). He alone has the wisdom to rule. If Job, in his limited knowledge, could not understand these basic facts of nature and the animal kingdom, then how could he be an able ruler or judge? Job was proven totally incompetent, and thus he was humbled.

It is evident in this list of animals and birds that God cares for all His creation. If He provides food and shelter for the animals (Psalm 104:24-29), how much more does He care for mankind, the crown of His creation (Matthew 6:26; 10:29-30)? If the animals have to depend on God for their existence, how much more should we, who have minds to reason and spirits that we might know God? Since Job was in a state of terrible suffering at the time, he needed this confirmation of God’s love and care; and even though this divine lecture was a rebuke, it must have still given him great comfort. God wanted Job to lift up His eyes and depend upon Him, as well as witness His glory, wisdom, and love, so that Job might be enlightened (cf. Psalm 36:7-9).

After considering the Lord’s greatness, Job no longer felt worthy to approach God as a proud prince, nor could he hope to defend and justify himself before God as he had previously longed to do. Rather, he felt vile and wicked for presuming to judge and contend with God. Once again, God gave Job the opportunity to defend himself, but all he could do was admit defeat and confess that he could not answer God (40:4-5).

God’s challenge to Job, however, was not over, for although Job submitted to God, he still had to fully yield to Him by repenting with his whole heart, which involved the recognition that he had sinned by criticizing the Almighty God. It is not a servant’s place to tell his master how he should lead, or even give him advice or change his rulings, for in so doing he would be acting as his master’s equal or even his superior. God asked Job, “Would you condemn me that you may be justified?” (40:8) As servants of God, our utmost duty is to honour and glorify Him. This cannot be done if we are thinking of ourselves and our own rights. We must decrease and God must increase.

The Lord asked Job, “Have you an arm like God?” (40:9). The arm of the Lord is pictured in the Bible as a mighty force which not only brings judgment but mercifully saves (cf. Isaiah 59:1). Job had confidently expressed that he would overcome what he felt to be God’s opposition to his justification. Did he think that with all his arguments and claims of innocence he could save himself? Or could he execute judgment and punishment upon the wicked? If he could; then God would have to bow to him (40:14), but of course that would be far from possible. Only our God’s

gracious outstretched arm can bring salvation. This outstretched arm reached down to mankind in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. :

Just as Job cannot save his soul, so also he could never hope to save his life from the great beasts that God had created. Only God Himself can confront and control the beasts (40:19). The identification of the “behemoth” (meaning “the beast par excellence”) is unknown, but it was not something mythical. Speculation has ranged from a hippopotamus to a dinosaur. We do learn from the text, however, that it was a large, grass-eating land animal that was feared by man. If Job was afraid of the behemoth and unable to confront it, even though it was only a fellow creation of God, how then could he hope to confront God, the creator Himself (cf. 41:10)?

### **Prayer**

Thank You, Lord, for reminding us of Your great desire to care for us in every area of our lives. It is our prayer today that we would “decrease” and You would “increase”.