

Lesson 2 | September 2, 2021

God Cares for Creation

Study Text

Job 31:1–6; 38:1 through 40:5

Central Truth

God cares for all of His creation.

Key Verse: Job 31:4

Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? (KJV).

“Doesn’t he see everything I do and every step I take?” (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the basic truths about God’s love and concern for His creation, as well as how He continues to care for it.
- Students will develop a growing, healthy concern and respect for creation that is rooted in biblical teachings.
- Students will live as the people of God who understand His love for the creation He has given to us.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: In this lesson, we will observe Job as he is confronted by the God of creation. **Job has been posing questions that may be legitimate, but some have been offered in an irreverent, almost accusatory way. In answering him, God put Job in his place, so to speak, reminding Job that he is one of God’s creatures not the all-knowing, all-powerful, and sovereign Creator.**

Opening Activity—Creator and Creation

Have you ever seen a piece of complex machinery with dozens of moving parts, all moving in precise movement so fast that the natural eye cannot keep up? What complex piece of machinery can you name that makes you wonder how it works and who thought of it?

Say: If you have ever toured the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., you may have seen dozens of inventions that made you wonder how their inventors came to make them. Wouldn’t it be exciting if each invention on display had the original inventor there to answer your questions? **Now put yourself in Job’s shoes. What question would you ask God about His creation?** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The words of 1 Chronicles 29:11 depict someone in awe over God's creation. "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things" (NLT). These words may leave you with the impression that the creature is being confronted by the handiwork of the Creator and left nearly speechless. The writer is in effect trying to say, "He's created it all; He owns it all; He controls it all."

Part 1—God Governs Heaven and Earth

Job Challenged To Explain Creation

Job 38:1,18–30

[Job 38:1-41 KJV] 1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said 18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all... 19 Where [is] the way [where] light dwelleth? and [as for] darkness, where [is] the place thereof, 20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths [to] the house thereof? 21 Knowest thou [it], because thou wast then born? or [because] the number of thy days [is] great? 22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, 23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? 24 By what way is the light parted, [which] scattereth the east wind upon the earth? 25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; 26 To cause it to rain on the earth, [where] no man [is; on] the wilderness, wherein [there is] no man; 27 To satisfy the desolate and waste [ground]; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? 28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? 29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? 30 The waters are hid as [with] a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

Say: Very few things grab our attention like a powerful thunderstorm. Those who live along a coast visited by hurricanes, or in the interior along "tornado alley," can attest to how powerful the storms of nature can be. We can only scarcely imagine, however, how God got Job's attention when He spoke to Job out of the whirlwind (Job 38:1). (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In Job 38:18–30, God asked Job a series of questions that were designed to bring Job to his senses and lead him into deep humility. Because these questions probe the depths of the created world, they are not asked so that Job

can provide answers. He can't. Instead, they are rhetorical questions, in which the answers are clear.

However, God's questions make Job think about the enormity of the earth and all its wonders. What is the origin of light and darkness, the cycles of rain, hail, and snow, the cause of wind patterns and the origin of lightning? For that matter, can Job explain the mystery of how desert plants get their water? These are the kinds of incomprehensible questions the Creator presented to His creature Job. All of the questions God posed to Job point to the greatness of God and the complete dependence of humanity upon God.

Today, in our modern world, we have much greater insight into these natural phenomena. Yet our answers to the deep questions of the universe are woefully inadequate to fully explain what God has made. For that reason, creation is no less awe-inspiring. Yet we must keep in mind the far greater limit of understanding in Job's day. For in that day, these were totally unfathomable questions.

Discuss

? Have you ever encountered a bit of information from natural science (biological, zoological, or geological) that completely "blew your mind"? If so, share with other members of the class the details that amazed you.

? Put yourself in Job's place and discuss how he may have felt when confronted by God with the marvels of His creation.

Job Challenged To Explain the Wonders of the Heavens

Job 38:31–38

[Job 38:31-38 KJV] 31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? 32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? 33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? 34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? 35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we [are]? 36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? 37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven, 38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

Say: In the next series of questions, God showed that Job was utterly helpless in controlling the stars, the clouds, and the lightning. The unspoken answer was

that only God can keep the stars in place and provide rain from the clouds. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Next the Creator turned His attention to the heavens as He continued asking questions of Job. **Could Job put together and hold in place star clusters like Pleiades or Orion's belt (verse 31)?** Could he explain the movement of the stars and what impact they have over the earth (verses 32–33)? Again, how could Job unravel these mysteries of the universe? While God had Job gazing upward, He asked Job if he understood and could control the water cycle of earth. Could he create a rainstorm, count the innumerable clouds, and command them to give up their treasured life-giving water? **Of course, Job could not do any of the things about which God had questioned him. Even today, the vastness of the heavens continues to intrigue and baffle the greatest minds of our time.**

Discuss

? How does it help your faith to know that God is in control of all the forces of the universe?

? When God created the earth and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He declared it “very good” (Genesis 1:31). What effect do you think the fall of Adam and Eve had on creation and the laws of nature?

Resource Packet Item 1: Finding God in My World

Distribute the work sheet and ask students to quickly jot down responses to each section. Ask several to share their responses as you write them on the board. Then take a moment as a class to worship God for who He is.

Part 2—God Cares for Animals God's Creation Reveals His Wisdom

Job 39:1–13,19–25

[Job 39:1-30 KJV] **1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? [or] canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? 2 Canst thou number the months [that] they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? 3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows. 4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them. 5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? 6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. 7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. 8 The range of the mountains [is] his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing. 9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? 10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the**

furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? 11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength [is] great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? 12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather [it into] thy barn? 13 [Gavest thou] the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? 14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, 15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. 16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though [they were] not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; 17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. 18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider. 19 **Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? 20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils [is] terrible. 21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in [his] strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. 22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. 23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. 24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that [it is] the sound of the trumpet. 25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.** 26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, [and] stretch her wings toward the south? 27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? 28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. 29 From thence she seeketh the prey, [and] her eyes behold afar off. 30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain [are], there [is] she.

Say: If you have been to a wild animal preserve, or even to a large zoo, you have probably been intrigued by the diversity of the animal kingdom. God's creativity and detailed planning are hard to miss when you observe the animals, especially if you can see them in their natural habitat and learn of their habits. **Television shows detailing these creatures have captured the attention of viewers of all ages through the years.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In an earlier defense in response to his friend Zophar (see Job 12:7–10), Job invited Zophar to examine the animals of God's creation, for they have something to teach God's people about God. Moving forward to Job 39, we see that the Scripture here focuses on not just the marvels of God's animal creation, but also the degree to which God takes care of and sustains His animal creation.

We must keep in mind that God was still posing unanswerable questions to Job. One by one, Job was confronted by the magnitude of God's wisdom in contrast to his own minuscule knowledge (Job 39:1–4). In the next lesson we will take a closer look at how the mountain goat's secretive birthing habits were a mystery to the ancient world. Yet even today, the mysteries of procreation are in many ways still unknown.

The course of life in the wild moves forward in verse 5. In Bible times, donkeys were quite familiar to almost everyone. Furthermore, they were especially noted for their freedom in the wild as well as their ability to survive very harsh conditions—making them an especially appropriate illustration of God’s care.

Here God asked Job to explain how animals like the wild donkey manage to survive in the wilderness. Had Job set the boundaries of their habitat (verses 6–8)? Of course not. **No human being even had the ability to understand how such an animal could thrive in the wild as the donkey does.**

What about the wild ox? This animal, too, was quite common. Scholars note that the animal mentioned here might have been a now-extinct wild ox called the aurochs. **Next to the elephant and rhinoceros, this was the most powerful animal in the world of the Bible.** Indeed, in Scripture this animal served as a symbol of strength (see Numbers 23:22; Deuteronomy 33:17; Psalm 29:6). It would be absurd to even think that Job could, by his own efforts, harness its strength for use in plowing (Job 39:10). **But God is powerful and sovereign to both care for and control every creature of creation.**

Then God asked Job if he could explain the strange behavior of an ostrich (verse 13, see also 14–18), or the fierce and fearless strength of the war horse (verses 19–25). How could Job even begin to explain the diversity, oddities, and uniqueness of God’s animal creation? **He could not, and only after Job realized the limitations of his human wisdom and knowledge would he be ready to be instructed by the Creator.**

Discuss

? What animals can you name that God especially equipped for survival in their native habitats?

? What are some animal species that amaze you? Explain.

God’s Creation Reveals His Care

Job 38:39–41

[Job 38:39-41 KJV] 39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, 40 When they couch in [their] dens, [and] abide in the covert to lie in wait? 41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Say: God did not create the earth and all its inhabitants without providing those inhabitants with what they would need, including natural instincts, to meet their daily needs. God reminds Job that all of this is far beyond Job’s understanding. Even with the scientific studies of the modern world, we can explain what the animals do to survive,

but only God could create such amazing creatures. (Share your highlights from the following text.) **There is coming a day when things are going to change and only God can change them.**

[Isa 11:6-10 NIV] 6 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. 9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. 10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

Beginning in Job 38:39, we see God confronting Job with another mystery connected with His animal creation. **In it we find the lengths God has gone in designing animals who are marvelously adapted to their habitat—a clear picture of both God's dominion over nature and His provision for His creation. Did Job know how to provide for the ravenous appetite of the lion, or the raven in its search to feed her young? Certainly not. Indeed, he likely had never even pondered how he might do such a thing. But God has the well-being of animals great and small in His view.**

What about Job's understanding of birds such as the raven as they care for their young? When the young cry out for food, are they not ultimately crying out to God? He is the one who equips the mother to care for its young. He is the one who watches His creatures with a close and caring eye. When one observes the marvels of animal creation, he or she is driven to the realization that the Creator has taken great care for His creation and made provision for its survival.

In the New Testament, Jesus memorably referenced God's care for the animal kingdom when He taught His followers not to worry: "Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?" (Matthew 6:26, NLT). God's care for His creation is as far beyond our understanding as it was beyond that of Job.

Discuss

? How does recognizing God's care for the animals encourage you regarding His care for you?

? Have you ever come to appreciate the wisdom of God by observing some part of the animal kingdom? Share your experience with the class.

Resource Packet Item 2: Conquering Worry

Distribute the case study, and divide your class into small groups. Give students a few minutes to read it and answer the questions. Ask several students to report their thoughts on one or more of the questions.

Part 3—God Is Sovereign Over Humankind

Job Invites God To Examine His Case

Job 31:1–6

[Job 31:1-6 KJV] 1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? 2 For what portion of God [is there] from above? and [what] inheritance of the Almighty from on high? 3 [Is] not destruction to the wicked? and a strange [punishment] to the workers of iniquity? 4 Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? 5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit; 6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

Say: Job 1:1 refers to Job as “blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil” (NLT). Yet today’s lesson shows us that, no matter how much integrity we may have, no matter how well we live our lives, we will have struggles. Indeed, we are no match for the majesty, sovereignty, and power of God. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In Job 3 through 27, Job had a series of dialogues with his friends regarding his lament and their response. Often amid these chapters, his comforters were also his critics. So, in Job’s closing defense before his “critic-comforters,” Job pointed out that God has complete control over, and knowledge of, his life (Job 31:4).

If he had committed some gross sin or grave offense, then God would surely have meted out His judgment. Implied is the recognition that God has built into humanity moral laws, including consequences when His laws have been violated (verses 1–3). Job not only knew this, but he submitted himself to the judgment of God for any wrongdoing he might have done.

“Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity” (Job 31:6, KJV). This passage might also refer to being weighed with honest or righteous scales, alluding to an honest person in business. **Job’s invitation for God to examine him is a recognition that God knows everything about him, and will evaluate him rightly, for He is just. Earlier Job confessed, “But he knows where I am going. And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold”** (Job 23:10, NLT). It is a statement of his confidence that if God examined him, He would find Job innocent.

Job had longed for an audience with God. He mused about what he would do if such an audience were granted, saying, “I would lay out my case and present my arguments. Then I would listen to his reply and understand what he says to me. Would he use his great power to argue with me? No, he would give me a fair hearing” (Job 23:4–6, NLT). Job recognized the sovereignty of God over creation and was confident that he could state his case before God.

Discuss

? Is it ever proper for people to ask questions of God? Are there other examples that you know of in the Bible where this happens?

? **God has created us with the capacity to think and reason. Human beings may question their own understanding of God when**

_____ . (Finish the sentence and discuss.)

God Answers Job

Job 40:1–5

[Job 40:1-5 KJV] 1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, 2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct [him]? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. 5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Say: Job was about to get the audience with God that he wanted. But he realized that **his confidence in his own defense before God was sadly lacking when compared to the wisdom and sovereignty of God.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Job had desired to have a conversation with God, but God silenced all of Job’s protests with one thundering question and challenge: “Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God’s critic, but do you have the answers?” (Job 40:2, NLT). All the intended words that Job might have desired to present in his defense suddenly did not matter. Job simply admitted, “I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say” (Job 40:4–5, NLT).

God had been bringing Job to a place of realization that he lacked the insight and wisdom to question the sovereignty of God. Somehow Job failed to realize that in his defense he had actually made accusations against God (verse 2). Then God asked him directly, “Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right?” (Job 40:8, NLT).

Through the course of chapters 41–42, God continued to present His matchless power and wisdom revealed in His creation. This served to drive home the gravity of Job’s offense. The creature has no right to demand that the Creator give an account of himself. When God was finished, all Job could do was acknowledge Him as the sovereign Lord. **“I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you” (Job 42:2, NLT). Job readily admitted, “I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me” (verse 3, NLT). Job had been confronted with a personal revelation of God, delivered by God himself, and it had transformed his understanding. There was no further response that he could make. All that was left for Job to do was repent. “I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance” (Job 42:5–6, NLT).**

Discuss

? How does God’s response to Job inform or change your personal understanding of God, as well as His work in your life and the lives of others?

? Is it wrong to entertain questions when real-life experience appears to contradict what we know about God? How should we proceed?

Resource Packet Item 1: Questions for God

Distribute the work sheet and give students a few minutes to work on it individually. Invite some to share their responses, but allow them to keep their responses private if they prefer.

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Creation is part of God’s revelation of himself. This revelation works to inform believers of truths that God has embedded in creation, which are foundational for understanding. Creation teaches truths about the Creator that are clarified and expanded later in the Scriptures. God has not thrown us into a world of chaos (as it sometimes appears), but He has placed us in a world planned and ordered according to His purposes. The Book of Job teaches us that when the world seems meaningless and chaotic, the people of God can go to the Scriptures to receive instruction and comfort.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Seek out scriptural truths that would help people in crisis, and be willing to share them with such people.
- Develop an intercessory prayer ministry through your church to pray when people are wrestling with questions like, “Where is God in all this?”
- Do a Bible study built around Romans 8:28. Make sure you include the verses before and after it (verses 22–34). Be prepared to share your insights with others..

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

David Acknowledges God’s Sovereignty.

1 Chronicles 29:10–14

[1Ch 29:10-14 KJV] 10 Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed [be] thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. **11** Thine, O LORD, [is] the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all [that is] in the heaven and in the earth [is thine]; thine [is] the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. **12** Both riches and honour [come] of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand [is] power and might; and in thine hand [it is] to make great, and to give strength unto all. **13** Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. **14** But who [am] I, and what [is] my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things [come] of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

Tuesday:

Creation Attests to the Creator.
Job 12:7–10

[Job 12:7-10 KJV] 7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: **8** Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. **9** Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? **10** In whose hand [is] the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

Wednesday:

God Provides for Creation.
Psalm 104:10–18

[Psa 104:10-18 KJV] 10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, [which] run among the hills. **11** They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. **12** By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, [which] sing among the branches. **13** He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. **14** He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; **15** And wine [that] maketh glad the heart of man, [and] oil to make [his] face to shine, and bread [which] strengtheneth man's heart. **16** The trees of the LORD are full [of sap]; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; **17** Where the birds make their nests: [as for] the stork, the fir trees [are] her house. **18** The high hills [are] a refuge for the wild goats; [and] the rocks for the conies.

Thursday:

God Values His Creation.
Luke 12:4–9

[Luk 12:4-9 KJV] 4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. **5** But I will forewarn

you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. 8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: 9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

Friday:

God Cares for Lost People.
Acts 17:24–28

[Act 17:24-28 KJV] 24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Saturday:

God Directs His People.
James 4:13–15

[Jas 4:13-15 KJV] 13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what [shall be] on the morrow. For what [is] your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye [ought] to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.