

Where were you when I established the earth?  
Tell me, if you have<sup>[a]</sup> understanding.  
<sup>5</sup> Who fixed its dimensions? Certainly you know!  
Who stretched a measuring line across it?  
<sup>6</sup> What supports its foundations?  
Or who laid its cornerstone  
<sup>7</sup> while the morning stars sang together  
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?  
<sup>8</sup> Who enclosed the sea behind doors  
when it burst from the womb,  
<sup>9</sup> when I made the clouds its garment  
and total darkness its blanket,<sup>[b]</sup>  
<sup>10</sup> when I determined its boundaries<sup>[c]</sup>  
and put its bars and doors in place,  
<sup>11</sup> when I declared, “You may come this far, but no farther;  
your proud waves stop here”?  
<sup>12</sup> Have you ever in your life commanded the morning  
or assigned the dawn its place,  
<sup>13</sup> so it may seize the edges of the earth  
and shake the wicked out of it?  
<sup>14</sup> The earth is changed as clay is by a seal;  
its hills stand out like the folds of a garment.  
<sup>15</sup> Light<sup>[d]</sup> is withheld from the wicked,  
and the arm raised in violence is broken.  
<sup>16</sup> Have you traveled to the sources of the sea  
or walked in the depths of the oceans?  
<sup>17</sup> Have the gates of death been revealed to you?  
Have you seen the gates of deep darkness?  
<sup>18</sup> Have you comprehended the extent of the earth?  
Tell me, if you know all this.

**Because I said so!** You’ve probably heard those words a time or two in your life, maybe you’ve even used them with our own children. These words usually fall at the end of a tirade of questions, “Why can’t we play video games? Because it’s not the weekend. Why can’t we play games during the week? Because you have work to do. What if we get all of our work done? No, Why? Because I said so!” It’s an appeal to authority. It says, “I said it. So it shall be written, so it shall be said. The authority has spoken let there be no further questions.”

We do such things with our children and those over whom we have authority. But it wouldn’t work to stand before a modern day dictator making demands, “Because I said so.” In fact if you did such a thing you might be laughed out of the room into a labor camp for the rest of your life. Our self-claimed authority doesn’t mean much in the face of world powers nor does it mean much before God. God is the authority.

He is the Almighty as referred to multiple times in the book of Job. He is one to be feared but in the face of so many God doesn't respond with, "Because I said so!" Nor does he send us off to a labor camp. But he also won't denigrate himself to answer Job's tirade of questions and accusations.

"Why? Why are you allowing these things to happen to me? Why did I suffer so? Why are you not acting justly in this world?" Instead of a "Because I said so," **God demonstrates his authority, his care, his compassion over all of creation and even more so for Job.** So if you feel like Job, maybe you're questioning God because you've lost home and family to fire, sickness, or you're out of work and wondering if God cares then know this. God loves you not **because I say so** but **because he says so.**

But you might have a hard case proving God loves and cares for Job in the book that bears his name. Most who give a cursory glimpse are left looking at God as an angry tyrant who allows his people to be punished in order to find out if they are faithful. The main message is missed and the opposite conclusion is found. Satan stood before God and made the accusations, "*Job only loves you because you do good things for him.*" And God allowed the devil to tempt him. Satan took everything, his money, his home, his family. As Job sat there scraping his wounds with a broken piece of pottery, mourning in dust and ashes, he did not sin in all of this. Even his wife consoled him, "Curse God and die!" And then his friends came and lectured him for 35 chapters, "You did something to deserve this! Confess your sins!"

He confessed, "*The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the lord be praised,*" (Job 1:21). He was even met with God's approval, "*There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil*" (Job 1:8). Why did this happen to him? Job certainly didn't do anything wrong. He wasn't receiving the consequences for his actions. He wasn't being punished. He was wronged. But who is to blame? Who is responsible? God is in control of all things and you could almost blame him for instigating such an attack against his servant Job. God called Satan's attention to Job. God said to him, "*Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him*" (Job 1:8).

All of this could have been prevented but God allowed it to happen. And Job asks the common question, "Why?" It gets worse. Job demands an audience with the almighty so that he might explain himself. With all of the suffering Job went through, he asks many questions, curses the day he was born, and longs for death but it doesn't come. And then we arrive at the moment we've been waiting for: God responds. The sinking feeling sets in as God starts asking the questions, "*Who is this who obscures my counsel with ignorant words? Get ready to answer me like a man.*" That's probably not how Job anticipated his encounter with the Almighty. This is not the direction he had hope the conversation would go. What follows is over 70 questions asking Job about the intricacies of this world. God does not demand respect or appealing to authority. God shows his authority and his power to do as he pleases.

At first glance God doesn't look compassionate or loving. Looking at our current world you might be led to question, "Is he?" The world struggles with injustice and oppression, violent mobs destroy the lives of so many who are struggling to survive. The property of homeless has been burned, businesses looted, people trying to help assaulted and beaten. And we ask the question, "Why?" We make the same mistake as Job. In our pride and self-assumed authority we think God should give us an answer *because I said so* and because I need to know the plans and purpose God has for the suffering in life.

We don't know why nor can we say why God would allow the loss of a loved one. We don't know why God would allow the loss of income, health, or home. At times we'd like to put God on trial and rage against him, stamp our feet, make our demands, like a child to his mother, "Because I said so!" And when he doesn't meet our demands the devil begins to whisper, "God doesn't care. He is not just or good." And then we may treat the Almighty, the LORD and creator of all things as the proverbial punching bag for 35 chapters. Why? Because I said so! We aren't as smart or as clever as we'd like to believe.

God could very well speak the same words to us, "*Who is this who darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?*" God doesn't appeal to his authority but he responds to his servant. He breaks the silence and shows up in the storm.

That's probably the most comforting part of this lesson. God shows up in the storm. Job was never alone. God was with him all along. Even if God sounds severe in his questions, "*God answered Job.*" God didn't answer Job's questions but then again neither did Job answer God's. Job doesn't know what's going on. God doesn't tell him. Job never finds out there was a war going on in the background for his soul. Job never finds out that God set limits for satan. Job never finds out that God was not responsible for all that happened to him. Instead God stresses his majesty, power, wisdom, and greatness. He speaks of their relationship as creator and created. God points to the fact that he is in control. Job is not.

God shows Job just how much he doesn't know, first, by starting with his love for creation. It didn't happen by accident. God used his wisdom and artistry to create. Verses 4-7 tell us how God poured over every square inch. He established the earth. He knows its dimensions. He's laid its foundations. But it's more than just a factual knowledge of data, lengths, and width. God also loves his creation even the parts that people curse. In verse 8-11 God speaks of himself as a mother giving birth to the sea. It was an uncontrollable force. It's where the Leviathan resided. But God speaks of the sea as a baby he swaddles and limits. God sets limits to the sea just as he limited satan, that means the sea has freedom where it may run but it is limited. God speaks of commanding the morning dawn causing its light to expose the darkness and bring light to the world. It's just like clay impressed by a seal. The image isn't clear until it makes its impression, only then does the clay take on greater clarity and detail. So it is with suffering in this world. It's not clear now but the time will come when all will be revealed.

God is bringing light and understanding to Job. Trying to get him to understand, "You don't know what you're asking for." God takes Job's words and throws them back, "*Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you comprehended the extent of the earth? Tell me if you know all of this.*" In other words, "You don't know what you're asking for." But God does and he is unwilling to give that to you just because you've said so.

God answers us in our suffering. He speaks to us in his Word and while he may seem silent for some time, he is patient, because he knows there is no reasoning with a child who is up way past their bed time. That is how the Lord deals with us. Because we don't know that there is a war going on in the background for our soul. We don't know how God sets limits for satan and how he guards and protects us from all evil. And then when we focus on our problems rather than our savior, we sink, like Peter. Thankfully, God is with us. He knows our troubles and he has done something about them.

When sin, death, and the devil sought to destroy us God laid down his son. He measured up the cost to redeem you and draw you near to him. He set limits for your life to protect you. The Almighty came down, did what no other could do, he walked on water. The sea we said was seen as an uncontrollable force, an untamed monster, the void and the abyss of chaos before creation. The place of death and Satan was trampled by the Christ who came. Jesus' great power and authority are on display but so is his great patience and saving love for foolish sinners.

He isn't just aware of our suffering he went through it as the only one innocent and he suffered, died, and rose. He rules this world for the good of his church and he uses all things for the good of those who love him. And he comes to us in his Word. We didn't go up to heaven or descend down into the depths. God gave us his Word he put it very near us. You don't have to go on a spiritual pilgrimage. You don't even have to cross the ocean to find him. He baptized us into his family and then sends us out into the world. He doesn't leave us to fend for ourselves but he leads us through the world and stands beside us as we go.

When the world or if even it feels like God is against us, look to the cross. The Psalms teach us to direct our attention to God and not to our problems, to the God who watches over your problems and your life. There will be times when the only thing you can do is turn to God and lament life's existence, you might even be tempted to tell God how to run the world and God patiently listens, forgives, and restores.

But he never lectures or berates, "Because I said so!" He shows us his power, his compassion, his love in Words and actions. He's said so. He's done so. Although our afflictions may be many, the LORD delivers us from them all. Amen.