

A REFLECTION ON JOB CHAPTER 38

Let me begin by stating that I am not a theologian. I have no education or training in religious studies, Judeo Christian or otherwise, and there is no scholarly authority that I am aware of for this reflection. What you have are the musings of a 60 something year old Episcopalian equipped with a Bible and a book of common prayer, which I should probably read more often than I do, a hymnal and supplemental study in meditation materials. I suppose we could do worse.

As I was reviewing this mornings reading from Job it seemed to me that it spoke to an ongoing perceived conflict of the ages, that of science vs. religion. It has a conflict that two diametrically opposed positions on the extremes, with most of us somewhere in between.

On one extreme is the pure science/atheistic view. This position maintains that there is no God, that all science came about naturally, and that all science can eventually be explained. On the other extreme position are the creationists. They believe that the earth is 6000 years old, that dinosaurs and people were on the earth together at the same time, that Noah's flood wiped out the dinosaurs and that nature does not evolve. Old extreme positions think they have all the answers. In my view neither one of them knows "didley". It is alright to say "didley" in Church?

In trying to get a handle on the science vs. religion conflict, I found it helpful to consider the scientific method. This is something that we all learned about in school, or at least most of us. Under the scientific method, we look at the world, make observations, collect data, conduct experiments, and then try to form a theory or answer that explains all that we have seen, collected and shown in our experiments. As new data, evidence and observations are made or additional experiments are conducted, the explanations or answers may change. However, it should be pointed out that even the atheists have no answer or explanation for that miracle that is life, what turns inanimate elements into living breathing organisms. They believe they will find it some day, if only they just keep looking.

Back on the other extreme, the Creationists. I have always considered Creationism to be ass/backwards. Now I know its okay to say ass/backwards in church because I sent an email to Reverend Volkamer and she said it okay. Here is what I mean. Creationism starts with the answer then they look around for data and evidence to support the answer and look for ways to discredit or debunk any evidence that does not support or contradicts their answer. As I said it is ass/backwards.

As a Christian, we have been blessed by God with gifts of intelligence, observation, interpretation and evaluation. And I believe we are expected to utilize those gifts. Of the two positions, I believe that the Creationists are the greater threat to truth. The Creationists tell us that if we don't see the world as they do, we are exalting and glorifying man over God. No way! I see it just the

opposite. It is by utilizing the gifts that God has given us the ones I just spoke about, to examine and learn about Gods creation, that we are exalting and glorifying God. If we refuse to do so, if we repress our curiosity, our reasoning and our intellect, if we turn a blind eye to all of the wonders of Gods creation, and reject the miraculous gifts of our creator aren't we saying that we know better than God. Then God can say to us, as he did to Job "were you there when I made the earth"? No, we weren't there, and neither were the Creationists. If we reject the miraculous gifts of our Creator, as being a hindrance, or a distraction, or even a lie. Are we exalting and glorifying God or are we exalting or glorifying mad.

According to my new Oxford Annotated Bible, it says that the purpose of the Book of Genesis is not to present a straight forward history, but rather it is to tell the dramatic story of God's dealings with the world. Amen to that. The fact of the matter is we don't know all the answers. Heck, we don't even know all the questions. But isn't that the point? We are not supposed to know everything. That's why it's called faith and belief. There is only one who knows everything as he said to Job "Were you there?" In the end does it really matter. I know that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and by His grace I have been redeemed. It doesn't matter if I believe the world is six thousand or six billion years old. The question is are we using the gifts of our creator to glorify God or to glorify man?