

Book of Job Bible Study
Chapter 38-42
Men's Bible Study
Using Rick Burgess
Man Church Bible Study
on The Book of Job

Rick Burgess's Bible study on Job Chapter 38

God Speaks

This session marked the pivotal moment in the book where God finally responds to Job.

Key Themes and Highlights

- **The Divine Confrontation:** Burgess highlighted that God does not answer Job's "why" questions about suffering. Instead, He appears in a whirlwind and questions Job's authority and knowledge, establishing that Job's perspective is limited.
- **"Dress for Action Like a Man":** A major focus was God's command in verse 3 for Job to "dress for action like a man" (or "gird up your loins"). Burgess interpreted this as a call for Job to stand firm and prepare for a direct, high-stakes encounter with his Creator.
- **Sovereignty Over Creation:** The study walked through God's rhetorical questions regarding the "foundations of the earth," the boundaries of the sea, and the control of weather patterns. Burgess emphasized that if man cannot understand or control these physical elements, they cannot possibly comprehend God's moral governance of the universe.
- **Correction of "Words Without Knowledge":** Burgess noted God's rebuke of Job for "darkening counsel" with ignorant words. The lesson for the men was to recognize the difference between expressing pain and making accusations against God's character.
- **Human Insignificance vs. Divine Wisdom:** The session underscored that while Job is "blameless," he is still small. Burgess challenged listeners to find peace in God's power rather than in having all the answers to their personal trials.

.....

Rick Burgess's Bible study on Job Chapter 39

This session continued God's direct address to Job from the whirlwind, focusing on the wonders of the animal kingdom to demonstrate divine wisdom and sovereignty.

Key Themes and Highlights

- **Sovereignty Over the Animal Kingdom:** Burgess discussed how God takes Job on a "tour" of creatures that answer only to Him, such as the mountain goat, the wild donkey, and the ostrich. The central point was that these animals thrive and survive without any human assistance or understanding, illustrating that the world does not need human wisdom to function.
- **Human Limitation and God's Knowledge:** A major takeaway was the contrast between God's "all-seeing" nature and man's limited perspective. Burgess emphasized that if Job could not understand the

Summary/Overview Job Ch 38-42 Men's Bible Study

basic instincts and reproductive cycles of wild animals, he was in no position to question God's moral governance of the universe.

- **The Gift of Wisdom:** Burgess taught that true wisdom is a gift of grace from God alone and does not necessarily come with age or experience. He challenged the men to seek guidance from the Lord for their own lives rather than relying on their own logic.
- **Divine Care for the "Useless":** The study highlighted God's delight in creatures that provide no direct value to humans, such as the wild ox or the ostrich. This was used to show that God cares for all His creation, even the parts that seem "insignificant" or "worthless" by human standards, reinforcing that His care for humanity—made in His image—is even greater.
- **Shifting Focus Away from Self:** By focusing on the majesty of creation, Burgess noted that God was effectively "resetting" Job's perspective. This shift helped take Job's eyes off his personal suffering and expanded his vision to see the vastness and complexity of God's design.

Specific Animals and Lessons

Burgess drew the following lessons from the animals mentioned in the text:

- **Mountain Goats (Ibex):** Burgess highlighted that God witnesses their birth cycles in secret, away from human eyes. The lesson is that God has intimate knowledge of and care for the "hidden" parts of creation that humans have no part in or understanding of.
- **Wild Donkeys:** These animals roam "pathless wastes" and do not answer to a human master. Burgess emphasized that they are free and provided for by God alone, teaching that God's providence extends to creatures that offer no direct utility to mankind.
- **Wild Ox:** God asks Job if a wild ox would ever willingly serve him or work on his farm. Burgess used this to show that if man cannot tame or control even a single wild animal, he certainly cannot expect to control or demand answers from the Almighty.
- **Ostrich:** God specifically notes that He deprived the ostrich of wisdom (Job 39:17). Burgess taught that **wisdom is a gift of grace** from God and not an inherent human right, illustrating that God's design sometimes includes elements that seem "foolish" by human standards but still serve His purposes.
- **War Horse:** Burgess focused on the courage of the horse, which God "clothed with might." The lesson for men was that true strength and courage are not self-generated but are gifts from the Creator to be used for His glory.

- **Hawk and Eagle:** Burgess noted that these birds fly and hunt by instinct programmed by God, not by Job's wisdom. The takeaway is that if the complex survival instincts of nature are God's handiwork, Job can trust God to govern his own life.

Main Takeaway for Men

Burgess challenged the men in the study to stop being "impressed with people" and their own logic, and instead to be **in awe of the Creator**. He emphasized that God's "resume" in nature proves He is competent to handle human suffering, even when He chooses not to explain the "why" behind it.

.....

Rick Burgess's Bible study on Job Chapter 40

This session focused on Job's initial humble response to God and the subsequent introduction of the "Behemoth" to further demonstrate divine power.

Key Themes and Highlights

- **Job's Silence:** After hearing God's first series of questions in chapters 38 and 39, Job responds by acknowledging he is "of small account." Burgess emphasized Job's decision to "lay his hand on his mouth," teaching that there comes a point where human questioning must stop and reverence must begin.
- **The Second Challenge:** Burgess noted that God was not finished with Job. He reiterated the command for Job to "dress for action like a man" (Job 40:7), challenging him to explain how he would govern the world if he were in God's place.
- **Correcting the Almighty:** A major practical application centered on verse 8, where God asks, "Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?" Burgess challenged the men to consider if they, like Job, ever indirectly accuse God of being wrong or unfair because they don't understand their current circumstances.
- **The Behemoth:** The latter half of the study focused on the Behemoth (often identified as a hippopotamus or a large extinct creature like a dinosaur). Burgess explained that God highlights this creature as the "first of the works of God" to show Job that if he cannot even stand before one of God's physical creations, he has no standing to challenge the Creator himself.
- **Sovereignty Over Chaos:** Burgess taught that the Behemoth represents forces that are untamable by man but "on a leash" for God. This served as a reminder that no trial or "chaotic monster" in a man's life is outside of God's control.

Lessons from the Behemoth

Burgess drew several specific lessons from God's description of this creature:

- **The "First of the Works" Lesson:** God describes the Behemoth as "the first of the works of God" (Job 40:19). Burgess explained that God is showing Job the "top of the food chain" in the physical world. The lesson is that if Job is intimidated by or unable to control a mere fellow-creature, he has no standing to cross-examine the Creator.
- **The "Chaos on a Leash" Lesson:** Burgess taught that the Behemoth represents forces in the world that are completely untamable by human effort. However, God emphasizes that He "made" the Behemoth and can "bring his sword" against it. For men today, the lesson is that the "monsters" in their lives—cancer, financial ruin, or loss—are still "on a leash" held by God.
- **The Futility of Human Correction:** Burgess focused on God's question in verse 8: *"Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?"* He used the Behemoth's sheer power to illustrate how absurd it is for a man to try and "correct the Almighty." If you cannot handle the "engine" of a Behemoth, you cannot handle the moral governance of the universe.
- **A Call to Silence:** Burgess highlighted Job's reaction—laying his hand over his mouth—as the proper response to God's power. He challenged the men in the study to stop trying to "talk their way out" of trials and instead adopt a posture of humble silence before a God who created such formidable beings.
- **Confidence in the Storm:** Just as the Behemoth is "not frightened" when the Jordan river rushes against its mouth (Job 40:23), Burgess argued that a man rooted in God's sovereignty should remain "undisturbed" by the turbulent waters of life.

The overarching takeaway Burgess emphasized was that **God's "resume" in nature** (the Behemoth) proves His competence in the spiritual and personal realms, even when He remains silent about the "why" of our suffering.

.....

Rick Burgess's Bible study on Job Chapter 41

This session concluded God's second and final speech to Job, focusing on the terrifying power of the Leviathan.

Key Themes and Highlights

- **The Identity of Leviathan:** Burgess discussed the nature of the Leviathan, noting that the name literally means **"the folded one"**.

Whether viewed as a literal ancient sea creature or a symbol of chaos, the focus was on its invincibility to human effort.

- **Chaos on a Leash:** A central theme was that no "chaotic monster" is outside God's control. Burgess emphasized that if Job could not catch a Leviathan with a fishhook or tame it like a pet, he certainly could not contend with the Creator who made it.
- **The King of Pride:** Burgess highlighted the description of Leviathan in verse 34 as the "**king over all that are proud.**" The lesson for men was that human pride is destroyed when confronted with the raw power of God's creation. If man is terrified by a creature, he must be humbled before the Creator.
- **Human Dependency:** The study reinforced that humans are "totally dependent on God". Burgess argued that if we cannot stand against a creature like Leviathan, our only logical posture before God is one of complete submission and trust rather than accusation.
- **The Futility of Human Weapons:** Burgess noted that weapons like swords, spears, and arrows are "straw and rotten wood" to the Leviathan. This served as a metaphor for human logic and self-defense when trying to manage trials—they are ineffective compared to the strength found in God's sovereignty.

Main Takeaway for Men

The primary challenge was for men to recognize that God is not just a "friend" but a **holy and terrifyingly powerful Sovereign**. Burgess urged the listeners to find security in that power; if God can "tame" the greatest forces of chaos (represented by Leviathan), He can certainly handle the storms in a believer's life.

1. Literal Interpretations

Many scholars and readers interpret Leviathan as a physical creature that existed in the ancient world:

- **Nile Crocodile:** This is the most common modern identification due to descriptions of its impenetrable scales (armor), fearsome teeth, and "jagged potsherds" undersides.
- **Whale or Large Marine Mammal:** Historical commentators, including Matthew Henry, often viewed it as a great whale, primarily based on its habitat in the "great and wide sea".
- **Extinct Reptile or Dinosaur:** Some creationist perspectives suggest Leviathan was a massive marine reptile, such as a **plesiosaur** or an extinct giant crocodile like **Sarcosuchus** (which grew up to 40 feet long). This view accounts for the "fire-breathing" descriptions as literal biochemical capabilities.

2. Symbolic and Theological Interpretations

These views look past the physical animal to the spiritual reality it represents:

Summary/Overview Job Ch 38-42 Men's Bible Study

- **Satan:** Burgess and other theologians argue that Leviathan serves as a "bookend" to the story, representing the Satanic force introduced in the first chapter. God's description of Leviathan as the "**king over all the children of pride**" (Job 41:34) is seen as a direct allusion to Satan.
- **Cosmic Chaos:** In this view, Leviathan represents the untamable forces of chaos and disorder in the universe. By showing Job that He has this "monster" on a leash, God demonstrates that even the most terrifying trials are under His control.

3. Mythological and Comparative Interpretations

Scholars often compare Leviathan to the literature of neighboring ancient cultures:

- **Lotan (Ugaritic Myth):** Leviathan is widely seen as a Hebrew reflection of **Lotan**, the seven-headed sea serpent defeated by the storm-god Baal in Canaanite mythology. The Bible "re-purposes" this imagery to show that the God of Israel—not Baal—is the true master of the sea.
- **Chaoskampf:** This term refers to the "struggle against chaos." In this framework, Leviathan is the primordial sea dragon common to Near Eastern myths (like Tiamat in Babylon), used poetically in Job to highlight God as the bringer of order.

4. Metaphorical Historical Use

Outside the book of Job, the Bible occasionally uses Leviathan as a metaphor for powerful, oppressive nations. For example, in **Isaiah 27:1**, Leviathan the "twisting serpent" is often interpreted as a symbol for world powers like Assyria or Babylon that God will eventually judge.

.....

Rick Burgess's Bible study on Job Chapter 42

This session served as the finale of a year-long, line-by-line study of the entire book.

Key Themes and Highlights

- **Job's Final Repentance:** Burgess focused on Job's response to God in verses 1–6. Job acknowledges that God's plans cannot be thwarted and repents of "speaking of things I did not understand." Burgess emphasized that Job's eyes had finally "seen" God, leading to a state of humble contentment even before any of his wealth was restored.
- **The Rebuke of the Friends:** Burgess highlighted God's anger toward Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. He noted that while the friends spoke many general truths, they failed to speak accurately about God's

character in Job's specific situation. The lesson for men was the danger of applying oversimplified "formulas" to suffering.

- **The Power of Intercession:** A major teaching point was verse 10: "And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, **when he had prayed for his friends.**" Burgess argued that Job's "breakthrough" came not when he focused on his own pain, but when he chose to intercede for those who had wronged him. He called this "turning the captivity" of his heart.
- **Observations on the Family:** Burgess shared a specific insight regarding the restoration list in verses 11–13, noting the **absence of Job's wife**. He questioned whether she had passed away or remained bitter, as the text only explicitly mentions brothers, sisters, and new children. He contrasted this with the "fairy tale ending" expectation, noting that God's restoration is often different than we imagine.
- **Double Restoration:** The study concluded by looking at the doubling of Job's assets. Burgess taught that this was not a "prosperity gospel" promise for every believer, but a specific vindication of Job's character. He emphasized that the "latter days" of a faithful man can be more blessed than the beginning, especially in eternal terms.

Main Takeaway for Men

Burgess challenged the men to realize that **God is the answer**, not the explanations for our suffering. He concluded the series by urging listeners to find peace in God's sovereignty and to practice the "discipline of intercession" even in the midst of their own trials.

These challenges center on moving from a "human-centered" to a "God-centered" worldview.

Core Challenges for Men

- **The "Gird Up" Challenge:** Burgess frequently focused on God's command in Job 38:3 to "**dress for action like a man**" (or "gird up your loins"). He challenged men to stop playing the victim and to take responsibility for their spiritual standing, preparing themselves for a direct, high-stakes encounter with their Creator.
- **The "Performance Trap":** A major challenge was unlearning the false theology that "good things happen to good people." Burgess argued that men often struggle when their "formula" for life fails (i.e., "I worked hard and stayed faithful, so I shouldn't be suffering"). He challenged them to accept that God's sovereignty does not always align with human logic or merit.
- **The Discipline of Silence:** In the study of Chapters 40 and 41, Burgess challenged men to "lay their hand over their mouth." He emphasized that a man's greatest challenge is often to stop demanding answers from God and instead adopt a posture of humble silence and reverence.

Summary/Overview Job Ch 38-42 Men's Bible Study

- **Confronting Personal Pride:** Through the imagery of the **Behemoth and Leviathan**, Burgess challenged men to recognize their own limitations. If a man cannot tame a physical creature, he certainly cannot "correct the Almighty." This was presented as a call to kill human pride and admit total dependency on God.
- **The Challenge of Intercession:** In the final study of Chapter 42, Burgess highlighted that Job’s breakthrough occurred only **after** he prayed for the friends who had hurt and judged him. He challenged men to move beyond their own pain and practice the difficult discipline of interceding for those who have wronged them. [From previous 2025 Study Archives]
- **Navigating Failed Support Systems:** Burgess noted that men often face the unique challenge of having their "inner circle"—friends and even their wives—fail them during trials. He challenged men to find their ultimate security in God’s character rather than in the shifting support of people.

.....

Overview Rick Burgess's Bible Study
On The Book Job chapters 39–42

Concludes God’s direct address to Job and details Job's final restoration.

Job Chapter 39: The Animal Kingdom

Burgess focused on God's "tour" of the wild, untamed animal kingdom—including the **mountain goat, wild donkey, ostrich, and war horse**.

- **Key Lesson:** Creation functions perfectly without human wisdom or intervention.
- **The Ostrich:** Burgess highlighted that God purposefully deprived the ostrich of wisdom, showing that **wisdom is a gift of grace**, not an inherent right.

Job Chapter 40: Behemoth and Human Limitation

This session centered on Job's silence and the introduction of the **Behemoth**.

- **The Confrontation:** Burgess emphasized God’s challenge to Job in verse 8: "Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?".
- **Behemoth:** Often identified as a large, untamable creature (like a hippopotamus or dinosaur), it represents "**chaos on a leash**". If man cannot stand before God's physical creations, he cannot stand before the Creator.

Job Chapter 41: Leviathan and the King of Pride

Burgess interpreted the **Leviathan** ("the folded one") as a symbol of both physical power and spiritual pride.

- **Sovereignty Over Chaos:** The study taught that no force of chaos is beyond God’s control.

- **The King of Pride:** Because Leviathan is the "king over all that are proud," Burgess challenged men to let go of their own pride when faced with the raw power of God.

Job Chapter 42: Restoration and Intercession

In the final session, Burgess focused on Job's repentance and the power of praying for others.

- **Seeing vs. Hearing:** Job moves from "hearing" about God to "seeing" Him, leading to true humility.
- **The Breakthrough:** Burgess emphasized that God restored Job's fortunes **only after** he prayed for the friends who had wronged him.
- **The Takeaway:** God is the answer, even when He does not provide an explanation for suffering.

Rick Burgess highlighted that Job's restoration was tied directly to his willingness to pray for the friends who had criticized and misjudged him.

Practical ways men can apply this lesson of intercession include:

- **Practice the "Shift of Focus":** Burgess taught that Job's "breakthrough" happened when he stopped focusing on his own boils and losses and started focusing on the spiritual needs of others. Practically, when in a trial, deliberately choose a day to pray exclusively for others' needs rather than your own.
- **Identify Your "Job's Friends":** Make a list of those who have failed you, misunderstood you, or offered "worthless counsel" during your hardships. Instead of harboring bitterness, use this list as a specific prayer roster.
- **Pray Aloud for Their Blessing:** Following the example in Job 42:8, where Job stood as a mediator, pray aloud for God to bless those who have wronged you. This helps "turn the captivity" of your own heart from resentment to peace.
- **Maintain "Short Accounts":** Burgess emphasized that Job was ready to intercede because he had already repented and humbled himself before God. Men can apply this by practicing regular confession to ensure their own "walk" doesn't hinder their ability to pray for others effectively.
- **Adopt Intercession as a Discipline:** Don't wait for "feelings" of forgiveness. Treat intercessory prayer as a masculine duty and a "spiritual workout". Schedule regular times for intercession just as you would for physical training.
- **Bridge the Gap in Your Community:** When you see a brother in your church or "Man Church" group faltering, recognize that God may be looking for *you* to pray them back into fellowship rather than joining in the criticism.

Burgess concluded that while we may not get the "why" for our suffering, we are given the "what" to do next: humble ourselves before God and intercede for our neighbors.