

As we come to the close of the book of Job it is difficult at first to understand the response that God makes to Job. While we may not understand the response we can look deeper into the exchange to find a more complex explanation for why this may have occurred as it did.

First of all in the beginning we know that Job is a man who eschewed evil (1.1) and was recognized by God for this to the extent that God had blessed him more than any of the other men of the East. This also attracted the attention of Satan as well. The devil hated Job. It appears that Satan hates those who are favored by God because he is out of favor and condemned. He is jealous because he sees that favor that God holds Job in and therefore wishes to attack and discredit God and hurt Job at the same time. It's an ideal solution. God allows this to happen to the extent that Satan is not allowed to kill Job. The fact remains that God recognized Job and called him a servant of his. So when it comes to the end of story, after all that Job has been through why do we read the response that God gives and why is this done in the manner that it is. We might expect God to come along and tell Job how pleased with him he is and then provide some explanation as to why this sequence of events has occurred. We have seen how God challenges the knowledge of Job by speaking in terms of power. The power and rite of creation which cannot be refuted or argued with. In that sense there was a statement that God is far beyond any capability that Job has, or would ever possess. God has declared his own abilities and challenged Job to respond in like kind. Why?

Remember that as the story progressed, Job did not attack or question God. He did however assume that God had set him up as his enemy, as a target to take aim at (). One of the things that comes out in the response that God gives is a refutation of this idea. So let's take a look at some of the finer points that are contained not in the things that are stated but in how they came about and the larger picture of what has happened.

God has, in the history of the world, as far as the scripture tell us, manifested himself to few mortals. These are a handful that really tells us that this appearance in and of itself is unique and constitutes a blessing. During the patriarchal period we know that God spoke to the heads of households (). We understand that this speaking was accomplished in indirect means using dreams (), visions () and other ways. We also know that God for the most part spoke with others but we have no real information concerning any manifestation of his presence with man. We have an indication that God, or perhaps Christ, manifested himself in some manner and walked in the Garden in the cool of the day (Gen 2.). In the event that is recorded prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah we find that God manifested himself in some manner to Abraham and spoke with him to tell him of the son that he was to have. We also know that God spoke with Moses and even stated that God spoke with him face as a man does with a friend. Other than these examples we find that for the most part God acted through other means. The writer of Hebrews tells us this (Heb 1) as the writer refers to prophets and others who were used to convey the message of God to those he wanted to receive it. So the first thing that we have to understand is that for God to manifest himself for the benefit of a mortal is indeed a rare event. One which has few parallels in the scriptures and which stands as a testimony to the greatness of god.

There is something else that this tells us however and that is that God has emotions. God has love for his servants and the Lord becomes angry when the care that he provides is not

appreciated. God gives liberally to all those who be chooses to bless and expects that those who receive such blessings will indeed acknowledge him at some point and give thanks for the things that he has provided. We find that in spite of a lack of gratitude, God continues to bless. Christ bring this our in his statement that God blesses the unthankful and the evil (Lk 6.35). Christ also points to the fact that God causes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust. James refers to God as the giver of every good and perfect gift (Jas 1). This is characteristic of God throughout time. The fact that God created man, gave him a home and provided for all contingencies is a statement of care and love for the created being. It is also a hallmark trait of mankind that we lose sight of the goodness and turn to things that God does not want us to do. Satan understood this possibility and exploited the vulnerability that man had. In this particular case it was the intention of the devil to make Job forget the goodness of god and turn on him. To act in a way that would anger God and insult him. It is perhaps hard to think that God can be insulted but that is just what the devil wanted to do. And he used one of God's children to do it. Aside from the physical pain and suffering that Satan was able to inflict he knew that this suffering would also affect God as well. We find that God cares for all humans as we have stated above and this is the very reason why Christ was sent into the world. It was the love that God has for the creature that brought him to allow such a terrible thing to happen to his own son. This is what John 3.16 is all about. It is the depth of God's love that brought god to allow this to happen. Words fail us to explain or even understand this but that is the extent of the willingness of God to do for his creation.

As God appears in the whirlwind it is a subtle thing but we find that God is addressing Job directly. God acts as though there is no one else there. He does not mention the others who are gathered there until much later. This is a very harsh insult. Remember that the friends of Job have gathered to comfort him and later turned to accusers and attackers. They have taken on their own to speak on behalf of God and now here is God and he's ignoring them. How much more evidence could there be for us to realize how in disdain or unimportant we are in a situation than to be ignored. We are told the God watches over those who are his but that his face is against them that do evil (1 Pet x.xx). We are also told that the death of one of God's saints is precious in his sight (psm ). Along with this is the care that God shows for those who are his. David stated that he had been young but was now old and had never seen the seed of the righteous forsaken or begging bread (Psm ).