

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Carson, D.A. Carson, How Long O Lord? 2d edition. Baker Academic, 2006.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Kaiser = Walter C. Kaiser in The Majesty of God in the Midst of Innocent Suffering.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Diagram / Structure

See outline(s).

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 38:1–3 1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 2 “Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? 3 “Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

Job 38:4–11 4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, 5 Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? 6 “On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 “Or who enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; 9 When I made a cloud its garment And thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors, 11 And I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop’?

Job 38:12–23 12 “Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, And caused the dawn to know its place, 13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 “It is changed like clay under the seal; And they stand forth like a garment. 15 “From the wicked their light is withheld, And the uplifted arm is broken. 16 “Have you entered into the springs of the sea Or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 “Have the gates of death been revealed to you, Or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? 18 “Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this. 19 “Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, 20 That you may take it to its territory And that you may discern the paths to its home? 21 “You know, for you were born then, And the number of your days is great! 22 “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, 23 Which I have reserved for the time of distress, For the day of war and battle?

24 “Where is the way that the light is divided, Or the east wind scattered on the earth? 25 “Who has cleft a channel for the flood, Or a way for the thunderbolt, 26 To bring rain on a land without people, On a desert without a man in it, 27 To satisfy the waste and desolate land And to make the seeds of grass to sprout? 28 “Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29 “From whose womb has come the ice? And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth? 30 “Water becomes hard like stone, And the surface of the deep is imprisoned.

Job 38:31–41 31 “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, Or loose the cords of Orion? 32 “Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, And guide the Bear with her satellites? 33 “Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, Or fix their rule over the earth? 34 “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, So that an abundance of water will cover you? 35 “Can you send forth lightnings that they may go And say to you, ‘Here we are’? 36 “Who has put wisdom in the innermost being Or given understanding to the mind? 37 “Who can count the clouds by wisdom, Or tip the water jars of the heavens, 38 When the dust hardens into a mass And the clods stick together? 39 “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 When they crouch in their dens And lie in wait in their lair? 41 “Who prepares for the raven its nourishment When its young cry to God And wander about without food?

Job 39:1-4 1 “Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer? 2 “Can you count the months they fulfill, Or do you know the time they give birth? 3 “They kneel down, they bring forth their young, They get rid of their labor pains. 4 “Their offspring become strong, they grow up in the open field; They leave and do not return to them.

Job 39:5-8 5 “Who sent out the wild donkey free? And who loosed the bonds of the swift donkey, 6 To whom I gave the wilderness for a home And the salt land for his dwelling place? 7 “He scorns the tumult of the city, The shoutings of the driver he does not hear. 8 “He explores the mountains for his pasture And searches after every green thing.

Job 39:9-12 9 “Will the wild ox consent to serve you, Or will he spend the night at your manger? 10 “Can you bind the wild ox in a furrow with ropes, Or will he harrow the valleys after you? 11 “Will you trust him because his strength is great And leave your labor to him? 12 “Will you have faith in him that he will return your grain And gather it from your threshing floor?

Job 39:13-18 13 “The ostriches’ wings flap joyously With the pinion and plumage of love, 14 For she abandons her eggs to the earth And warms them in the dust, 15 And she forgets that a foot may crush them, Or that a wild beast may trample them. 16 “She treats her young cruelly, as if they were not hers; Though her labor be in vain, she is unconcerned; 17 Because God has made her forget wisdom, And has not given her a share of understanding. 18 “When she lifts herself on high, She laughs at the horse and his rider.

Job 39:19-25 19 “Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane? 20 “Do you make him leap like the locust? His majestic snorting is terrible. 21 “He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He goes out to meet the weapons. 22 “He laughs at fear and is not dismayed; And he does not turn back from the sword. 23 “The quiver rattles against him, The flashing spear and javelin. 24 “With shaking and rage he races over the ground, And he does not stand still at the voice of the trumpet. 25 “As often as the trumpet sounds he says, ‘Aha!’ And he scents the battle from afar, And the thunder of the captains and the war cry.

Job 39:26-30 26 “Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars, Stretching his wings toward the south? 27 “Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up And makes his nest on high? 28 “On the cliff he dwells and lodges, Upon the rocky crag, an inaccessible place. 29 “From there he spies out food; His eyes see it from afar. 30 “His young ones also suck up blood; And where the slain are, there is he.”

Job 40:1-2 1 Then the LORD said to Job, 2 “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.”

Job 40:3-5 3 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 4 “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 “Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. GOD'S FIRST SPEECH (38:1–40:2)
 - A. God's opening rebuke and challenge to Job (38:1–3)
 - B. God's questioning of Job regarding inanimate nature (38:4–38)
 - 1. Questions about the earth (38:4–21)
 - 2. Questions about the sky (38:22–30)
 - 3. Questions about stars and clouds (38:31–38)
 - C. God's questioning of Job regarding animate nature (38:39–39:30)
 - 1. Lions and ravens (38:39–41)
 - 2. Goats and deer (39:1–4)
 - 3. Wild donkeys and wild oxen (39:5–12)
 - 4. Ostriches, storks, war horses, and locusts (39:13–25)
 - 5. Hawks and eagles (39:26–30)
 - D. God's closing rebuke and challenge to Job (40:1–2)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. God Challenges Job To Answer His Questions Job 38:1–3
- II. The Earth and the Sea Job 38:4–11
- III. Dawn, Darkness and Sheol Job 38:12–21
- IV. The Heavens Job 38:22–38
- V. Wild Life Job 38:39–39:12
- VI. The Ostrich, Horse and Eagle Job 39:13–30
- VII. God Challenges Job to Answer Job 40:1–2

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- I. "Can you explain My creation?" (38:1–38)
 - A. The Creation of the earth (38:4–7) and consideration of the seas (38:8–11)
 - B. The sun (Job 38:12–15)
 - C. The next eleven questions (Job 38:16–24) relate to the vast dimensions of creation
 - D. The rain? (vv. 25–28)
 - E. Winter hail and frost (vv. 29–30)
 - F. Verses 34–38, the Lord called Job's attention to the clouds
- II. "Can you oversee My creation?" (38:39–39:30)
 - A. Did Job know how to feed the lion cubs or the young ravens? (Job 38:39–41)
 - B. Did Job know the gestation periods for the goats and deer and how the young are born? (39:1–4)
 - C. The wild donkey (vv. 5–8)
 - D. The wild ox (vv. 9–12)
 - E. The stork and the ostrich (vv. 13–18)
 - F. The horse (vv. 19–25)
 - G. The hawk and the eagle (vv. 26–30)
- III. Job's first response (Job 40:1–5)
- IV. "Can you subdue My creation?" (40:6–41:34)
- V. Job's second response (42:1–6)

The New American Commentary: Robert L. Alden

I. THE LORD FINALLY SPEAKS TO JOB (38:1–42:6)

- A. The Lord's First Introductory Challenge (38:1–3)
- B. The Divine Interrogation (38:4–39:30)
 - 1. Creation (38:4–7)
 - 2. The Sea (38:8–11)
 - 3. The Earth's Administration (38:12–15)
 - 4. The Underworld (38:16–18)
 - 5. Light and Darkness (38:19–21)
 - 6. Storm (38:22–30)
 - 7. Stars (38:31–33)
 - 8. Clouds (38:34–38)
 - 9. Lions and Ravens (38:39–41)
 - 10. Mountain Goats (39:1–4)
 - 11. Wild Donkeys (39:5–8)
 - 12. Wild Oxen (39:9–12)
 - 13. Ostriches (39:13–18)
 - 14. Horses (39:19–25)
 - 15. Hawks (39:26–30)
- C. Concluding Challenge (40:1–2)
- D. Job's First Repentance (40:3–5)

Job (Charles Swindoll)

Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash)

- A. The Event: The Astonishing Voice of God (v. 1)
- B. The Issue: Full Knowledge of the Universe (vv. 2-3)
- C. The Answer (Part 1): God's Counsel is Revealed in the Inanimate Creation Order (vv. 4-38)
 - 1. The Place of Evil in the Good Created Order (vv. 4-21)
 - a. The Order of Creation is Joyful (vv. 4-7)
 - b. Evil has a Limited Place in Creation (vv. 8-11)
 - c. The Structure of Creation Shows that Evil Will One Day be Destroyed (vv. 12-15)
 - 2. The Place of the Dead is Known to God (vv. 16-18)
 - 3. Light and Darkness Are Controlled by God (vv. 19-21)
 - 4. Snow and Hail Are God's Waters for Trouble (vv. 22-24)
 - 5. Rain is God's Water for Life (vv. 25-27)
 - 6. Interlude: Think About the Different Forms of Water (vv. 28-30)
 - 7. The Heavenly Government of the World is Under God's Control (vv. 31-33)
 - 8. Life-Giving Water is Under God's Control (vv. 34-38)
- I. The Lord's First Speech, Part 2: Nature, Red in Tooth and Claw? (38:39-40:5)
 - A. God's Counsel is Revealed in the Animals and Birds (38:39-39:30)
 - 1. Predator and Prey in the Wild (vv. 38:39-41)
 - 2. God's Time for Life in the Wild (vv. 39:1-4)
 - 3. Freedom and Provision in the Wild (39:5-8)

4. Power and Danger from the Wild (39:9-12)
 5. Foolish Wonder in the Wild (39:13-18)
 6. Terror from the Wild (39:19-25)
 7. Predator and Prey in the Wild (39:26-30)
- B. Concluding Challenge (40:1-2)
- C. Job's Response (40:3-5)

Biblical Studies: Job (Sam Storms)

- I. God's First Speech—38:1–40:2
- A. The challenge—38:1–3
- B. The inquisition—38:4–41
1. creation of the universe—38:4–7
 2. creation of the seas—38:8–11
 3. creation of the dawn—38:12–15
 4. the expanse of the earth—38:16–18
 5. light, darkness, snow and hail—38:19–24
 6. rain, dew, ice and frost—38:25–30
 7. the stars and constellations—38:31–33
 8. clouds and lightning—38:34–38
 9. the lion and the raven—38:39–41
 10. the mountain goat—39:1–4
 11. the donkey and ox—39:5–12
 12. the ostrich—39:13–18
 13. the horse—39:19–25
 14. the hawk—39:26–30
- C. The challenge renewed—40:1–2

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

- I. God's First Reply to Job: Who Are You? (38:1-40:2)
 - A. Opening Challenge (38:1-3)
 - B. God's questioning of Job regarding inanimate nature (38:4–38)
 - 1. Questions about the earth (38:4–7)
 - a. Creation (38:4-7)
 - (1) God is the architect (4-5a)
 - (2) God is the surveyor (v 5b)
 - (3) God is the engineer (v 6)
 - (4) God's Work Applauded by Angels (7)
 - 2. Questions about the sea (38:8-11)
 - a. Birth of the Sea (38:8-9)
 - b. Boundaries of the Sea (38:10-11)
 - 3. Questions about Light and Darkness (38:12-15)
 - 4. Questions about Unexplored places (38:16-21)
 - 5. Questions about the Seasons and Weather (38:22–30)
 - 6. Questions about Stars and Clouds (38:31–38)
 - C. God's questioning of Job regarding animate nature (38:39–39:30)
 - 1. Lions (38:39–40)
 - 2. Ravens (38:41)
 - 3. Goats and deer (39:1–4)
 - 4. Wild donkeys (39:5–8)
 - 5. Wild oxen (39:9–12)
 - 6. Ostriches (39:13–18)
 - 7. Horses (39:19–25)
 - 8. Hawks and eagles (39:26–30)
 - D. God's Closing Challenge (40:1-2)
 - E. Job's Response (40:3-5)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. God's First Reply to Job: Who Are You? (38:1-40:2)
 - A. God's Opening Statement (38:1-3)
 - B. God as Prosecuting Attorney and Judge (38:4-39:30)
 - 1. Job's Finiteness: Were You There? (38:4-11)
 - a. Questions about the earth (38:4–7)
 - (1) Creation (38:4-7)
 - (a) God is the architect (4-5a)
 - (b) God is the surveyor (v 5b)
 - (c) God is the engineer (v 6)
 - (d) God's Work Applauded by Angels (7)
 - b. Questions about the sea (38:8-11)
 - (1) Birth of the Sea (38:8-9)
 - (2) Boundaries of the Sea (38:10-11)
 - 2. Job's Experience: Have You? (38:12-30)

- a. Questions about Light and Darkness (38:12-15)
- b. Questions about Unexplored places (38:16-17)
- c. Questions about the Seasons and Weather (38:22–30)
 - (1) Expanse of the Earth (18)
 - (2) Light and Darkness (19-21)
 - (3) Snow and Hail (22-23)
 - (4) Lightening and East Winds (24)
 - (5) Rain (25-27)
 - (6) Ice and Frost — Father / Mother Metaphor (28-30)
- 3. Job’s Ability: Can You? (38:31-41)
 - a. Questions about stars and clouds (38:31–38)
 - (1) Stars (31-33)
 - (2) Clouds (34-37)
 - (a) Then there’s the question of v. 36
 - b. Questions about the animal kingdom (38:39–41)
 - (1) Lions (38:39–40)
 - (2) Ravens (38:41)
- 4. Job’s Knowledge: Do You Know? (39:1-4)
 - a. Questions about the animal kingdom, continued (39:1-4)
 - (1) Goats and deer (39:1–4)
- 5. Job’s Impotence: Who is Almighty? (39:5-30)
 - a. Questions about the animal kingdom, continued (39:5-30)
 - (1) The Wild Donkey: Independent Existence (39:5–8)
 - (2) The Wild Oxen: Fearsome Power (39:9–12)
 - (3) The Ostrich: Humorous Indifference (39:13–18)
 - (4) The War Horse: Dark and Terrible (39:19–25)
 - (5) The Hawk: Graceful Flight (39:26)
 - (6) The Eagle: Life, Death (39:27–30)
- C. God’s Closing Argument (40:1-2)

Closing Points for Message 1:

1. If we are in Christ we are clothed with Christ.
2. Beware of treading too deep into questions of “why?”
3. Every one of us will stand before God.

Closing Points for Message 2:

1. Jesus Christ, as God, providentially controls all things.
2. Jesus conquered the “King of terrors” (death).

Closing Points for Message 3:

1. God is bigger than we can fathom.
2. God’s faithfulness is bigger than we can fathom.
3. God’s work on the Cross is far-greater than we can fathom.

Closing Points for Message 4:

1. Tough questions melt in the light of God's nature.
2. God delights in His creation—even in its fallen state.
3. If God so enjoys the animal world, how much more people created in his image?
4. If people are created for God's glory, how much more so those of us who have been re-created in Christ!
5. If the redeemed bring God glory, we ought to be driven to reach the lost so that they may be added to the chorus.

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): God's first reply to Job

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): whereby He questions Job's ability to run the creation

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Questions become mute in light of who God is

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: Tough questions melt in the light of God's nature.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: God's First Reply to Job: Not "Why" but "Who" (multiple parts)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Job gets his wish of having a face-to-face meeting with God. Cf. 9:34–35; 10:2; 13:3, 15, 18, 22; 23:3–6; 31:35–37. “The Lord will speak twice, perhaps to parallel the two times he spoke in the parallel heavenly scenes at the start (1:6–12; 2:1–6).” [Ash, 375]

“It is important to recognize that God does not here charge Job with sins that have brought on his suffering. He does not respond to the ‘whys’ of Job’s suffering, nor does he challenge Job’s defense of his own integrity. The reason he calls Job on the carpet is not because of Job’s justification of himself, but because of Job’s willingness to condemn God in order to justify himself. In other words, God does not here answer Job’s questions about the problem of evil and suffering, *but he makes it unambiguously clear what answers are not acceptable in God’s universe.*” [Carson, 151]

Job’s question of why God would do this to him festered into complaints of how could you do this to me. The Heb. noun ‘siach,’ consistently translated “complaint” t/o Job, always comes from the mouth of Job. Cf. Phil. 2:14.

There are two main elements: vv 4–21, concerning the earth, and vv 22–38, concerning the heavens.

God’s address to Job centered on His works in nature and consisted of seventy-seven questions interspersed with divine commentary relating to the questions. The whole purpose of this interrogation was to make Job realize his own inadequacy and inability to meet God as an equal and defend his cause. [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient, “Be” Commentary Series* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 144]

Verses 4–38 focus on inanimate nature:

In a series of questions on cosmology, oceanography, meteorology, and astronomy, God challenged Job’s competence to judge His control of the world. God used irony to point up Job’s ignorance (e.g., “Tell Me,” vv. 4, 18; “Surely you know!” vv. 5, 21). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 767]

The structure of this first speech of Yahweh is straightforward. It is prefaced by a twoline proem in 38:2–3, and concluded by a peroration in 40:1–2. The body of the speech is divided into two almost equal halves: 38:4–38 (35 lines) concerning the physical universe, and 38:39–39:30 (33 lines) concerning the world of animals (it is strange that the chapter division was placed where it was, and not three verses later). [David J. A. Clines, *Job 38–42*, vol. 18B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 1085]

The first half of the first divine speech consists of ten strophes concerning different aspects of the physical world: (1) the structure of the world (vv 4–7), (2) the sea (vv 8–

11), (3) the new day (vv 12–15), (4) the underworld (vv 16–18), (5) light and darkness (vv 19–21), (6) the heavenly storehouses (vv 22–24), (7) rainstorm and lightning (vv 25–27), (8) rain, dew, rime, hoar-frost, ice (vv 28–30), (9) the four constellations (vv 31–33), (10) the clouds (vv 34–38). [David J. A. Clines]

“The genre of the speech as a whole is that of the disputation speech. . . . The setting of the disputation remains the lawsuit . . .” [David J. A. Clines]

On the question of “tone:”

The question of the tone of Yahweh’s speeches is an intriguing one (see also the comments on the tonality of the speeches under Form/Structure/Setting above). Most readers and commentators think Yahweh is severe, and some would say condescending, sarcastic, and bullying.

But Yahweh’s tone does not strike all readers in the same way. Terrien, for example, thinks that Yahweh speaks with a “courteous and slightly wistful irony,” and Andersen finds a “kindly playfulness in the Lord’s speeches which is quite relaxing.” Carl Heinrich Cornill, in contrast, spoke of their “unparalleled brutality, which is usually palliated and styled divine irony, but which, under such circumstances and conditions, should much rather be termed devilish scorn . . . [David J. A. Clines]

In this discourse, Yahweh knows his universe intimately. He knows how broad the earth is (38:18), the directions to the dwellings of light and darkness (38:19), the system of the stars (38:33), the birth cycle of mountain goats (39:1–3); he implants migratory instincts into birds (39:26) and maternal fecklessness into ostriches (39:16–17). “Nature for the Job poet is not a Newtonian clock operating with automatic mechanisms” (Robert Alter, “The Voice from the Whirlwind,” *Commentary* 77/1 [1984] 33–41 [38]). This God loves the detail, and, even when he is taking the broadest view, he only ever works with examples. . . . According to this worldview, the god of all the earth is counting the months of pregnancy of each doe of the mountain goats (39:2), imbuing horses with their strength (39:19), training hawks in flight (39:26), providing fresh meat for young lions in their lairs (38:39–40), directing the raven to its quarry when its fledglings croak for lack of food (38:41). [David J. A. Clines]

Note the lawsuit motif:

31:35–37 (Job): 35 “Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, 36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. 37 “I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him.

Carson writes:

“Job had wanted an interview with the Almighty. He had, as it were, sworn an affidavit demanding that the Almighty appear and put his indictment in writing (31:35). But God’s defense wasn’t quite what Job had in mind.” [Carson, 151]

Metaphorical creation language:

The details of v. 7 remind us that we are dealing with a nature poem and not a treatise on geology. Literalists who press the details of this and any of the other segments of these chapters will immediately discover irreconcilable difficulties. The best advice is be poetic as you read. Position yourself thousands of years ago in the steppes of Transjordan, standing in the maelstrom and listening to an awesome voice coming through the wind. It is musical; it is impressive; it is scary but wonderful. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 370]

Note the Theophany here. Also, the fact that the creation at large is addressed (earth, sky, animals, etc.), but the creation of man is not (which is interesting).

“Yet humankind is present in chapters 38-41, not in the catalogue of creatures described by Yahweh, but as the addressee to whom Yahweh offers the descriptions. This means that Job (or humankind generally) is not, as some have concluded, so insignificant a creature as to be overlooked in the general cosmic picture. Rather, humankind is that part of creation whom God addresses with questions concerning the rest of creation.” [Jansen, 229]

There are parallels to ANE creation myths (bars, barriers, doors, etc.) such as the Babylonian creation account. This in no way affirms these myths as being genuine. The usage is a parallel, or condescension, to known language.

Poetry speaks in figures and pictures. No one accuses Joyce Kilmer of scientific ignorance when he described “a tree that looks to God all day, and lifts her heavy arms to pray.” If it is poetry, then one is not obligated to take it (or defend it) as a scientifically precise narrative. Those who belittle its alleged scientific inaccuracies must first dismiss its poetic dimensions. [Talbert 203]

VERSES 38:1-3

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 “Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind. He said: 2 Who is this who obscures My counsel with ignorant words? 3 Get ready to answer Me like a man; when I question you, you will inform Me.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: 2 “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,

Job had previously bemoaned the fact that he wasn't getting a hearing in God's presence:

9:16–18 16 “If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice. 17 “For He bruises me with a tempest And multiplies my wounds without cause. 18 “He will not allow me to get my breath, But saturates me with bitterness. 23:3 “Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat!

Note YHWH. The name that God revealed to Israel (Ex. 3:13ff), speaks of His self-existence (“I AM THAT I AM”) and His covenant relationship to His people. Note often used in Job with the exception of chapters 1-2 and perhaps 12:9. Almost exclusively, the three friends and Elihu refer to Him using forms of Elohim or Shadai. Note the significance in light of the book of Job and God speaking here. Also, that this name was not revealed to Israel until centuries later in Exodus 3. Who are you? Let me introduce myself, I'm YHWH.

God's appearance was accompanied by a storm, possibly the storm Elihu may have sensed was approaching (37:22). “Storm” translates se‘ārâh, “a tempest or storm

accompanied by violent wind” (also used, e.g., in 2 Kings 2:1, 11; Isa. 40:24, “whirlwind”; Ps. 107:25; Isa. 29:6, “tempest”; Ezek. 1:4, “windstorm”). Ironically “a mighty wind” caused the death of Job’s 10 sons and daughters. Now a violent storm accompanied God’s communication. Whereas the one was the occasion of ruin resulting in personal sorrow, this one was the occasion of revelation resulting in personal submission. Sometimes God used storms to dramatize awesome occasions (cf. Ex. 19:16–17; 1 Kings 19:11–13). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 766–767]

Storms were associated with appearances of God in Exodus 19:19–20; Judges 5:4–5; Habakkuk 3:5–6; Psalm 18:8–16; Zech. 9:14. Jesus, as God, stilled the storm (Matt. 8:24–27).

The power and majesty of God are evidenced most dramatically in the forces of nature. “Whirlwind” and “storm” are often expressions of his judgment. . . . For all their grandeur, however, these mighty forces are dwarfed in the presence of the Lord, whom the highest heavens cannot contain; the tempest is but the disturbance caused as he marches by, and the dark storm clouds are merely dust stirred up by his feet. [Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Volume 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985, 462)]

9:16–17 (Job): 16 “If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice. 17 “For He bruises me with a tempest And multiplies my wounds without cause.

The Heb. term for “whirlwind” is used of Elijah’s departure from earth to heaven (2 Kings 2:1,11), Ezekiel’s experience when he saw the Lord (Ezek. 1:4). Cf. Nahum 1:3 where the word is used. Job used a form of the word when he referenced God’s “tempest” (Job 9:17).

Another example of a storm Theophany is found in Ezekiel 1:4:

As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire.

Talbert (p. 198) believes this could be a Christophany:

1. The speech revolves around creation with the implication being that the one speaking is Creator. Jesus was the special agent of creation (John 1:1ff.; Col 1:16).
2. Job spoke of a mediator between he and God (9:32–33; cf. 1 Tim. 2:5).
3. Jesus is the apex of divine revelation. He is called “the Word” (John 1:1); He is the one through whom the prophets spoke (1 Peter 1:11).
4. Isaiah’s vision (Isaiah 6) compared with John 12:37–41 is an example of NT revelation demonstrating that an OT vision of God was none other than Jesus (note also Isaiah 45:22–23 cf. with Phil. 2:9–11).
5. Chapter 5 references “the Lord” (God) who will come (5:7–8) and judge (5:9) —cf. John 5:22, Acts 10:42, 2 Cor. 5:10.

This is a revelation of God BEFORE written revelation (Eg. the Pentateuch).

The important point is that Yahweh is not simply taking up the role of wisdom instructor; the tone of his words should be understood as a rebuke. The storm does not simply convey his power; it conveys his wrath. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 398]

2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”

Could be translated “who are you” [so, UBS Handbook]. Cf. Paul in Romans 9:19-20.

The story is told of Benjamin Jowett, when he was Headmaster of Balliol College at Oxford. Someone asked him the question, “Dr. Jowett, we would like to know your opinion of God.” His reply: “The only constant anxiety of my life is to know what is God’s opinion of me.” [Ash, 374]

Job has been saying much about his opinion of God. Now it’s God’s turn.

Elihu: 37:19 “Tell us what we should say to him; we cannot draw up our case because of our darkness. [NIV]

Job’s words were “without knowledge” as Elihu had twice said (34:35; 35:16). What kind of knowledge can man have compared to the One who is source of all knowledge? We are foundationally ignorant.

A form of the word for “knowledge” occurs in v. 2,3,4,5. These verses could be translated:

2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”

3 “Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you will make me know!”

4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you know understanding?”

5 Who set its measurements? Since you know.

38:18: “Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this.

Foundational to epistemology. We are not “independent” thinkers.

3 “Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!”

“In Hebrew, the loins (חלצים) are that part of the body between the waist and the upper thighs.” [Clines] — this was something men did. “Man up” for a task. Some see an allusion to ancient “belt wrestling” where contestants would battle to remove the other’s belt. Cf. Jacob who wrestled with God.

Cf. 40:7, 2 Kings 4:29, Jer. 1:17, and 1 Peter 1:13. Acting like a man (גבר) is not PC today. Cf. 1 Cor. 16:13. Warrior speech (Isa. 5:27). Job wanted to battle God; he is going to get his wish.

Yahweh's call to Job to gird up his loins is a call to combat, to the combat between warriors, to the combat of heroes. If he is to gird up his loins, he must be expected to fight, or at least, to be attacked. [David J. A. Clines]

Then God told Job to get ready for His questions. (Brace yourself like a man; cf. 40:7, is lit., "gird up your loins like a man," *geber*, "strong man," that is, tuck your outer robe-like garment into your sash-belt as a man does before taking on a strenuous task such as running or fighting in a battle, Ex. 12:11; 1 Kings 18:46.) Job was to be alert so he could answer God intelligently. This is a striking reversal of Job's words to God, "Let the Almighty answer me" (31:35). Job the plaintiff had now become the defendant! [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Declare to me translates "make me know" and has been used by Job when addressing God in 10:2; 13:23, and by Elihu in 37:19 when speaking to Job. [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 695]

36:22 (Elihu) "Behold, God is exalted in His power; Who is a teacher like Him?"

VERSES 38:4-7

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding,
5 Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? 6 “On what were
its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the
sons of God shouted for joy?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.
5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On
what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and
all the sons of God shouted for joy?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

4 Where were you when I established the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 5 Who fixed
its dimensions? Certainly you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 What supports
its foundations? Or who laid its cornerstone 7 while the morning stars sang together and all the
sons of God shouted for joy?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

4 “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who
marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On
what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— 7 while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have
understanding, 5 Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on
it?**

Isaiah 40:12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off
the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And
weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales?

The earth was thought of as a building set on foundations, as in Psalm 24:2; 89:11; 102:25;
104:5; Proverbs 3:19; Isaiah 48:13; 51:13, 16; Zechariah 12:1. Clearly figurative language (cf.
pagan religions).

The language of “doors,” “womb,” and “bars (v. 10) does have parallels in the Akkadian
account of creation, but the bizarre antics of the polytheistic pantheon of ancient

Mesopotamia are manifold times more different from than similar to the Genesis account of creation and biblical nature poems. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 371]

In contrast to ANE mythology which viewed the sea as a god with awesome powers, it is here (38:8–11) portrayed as in complete submission to God’s sovereign authority. “Deep in the recesses of the universe’s womb, enclosed by double doors ... Yahweh skillfully knit the sea together like a fetus. At the end of its gestation Yahweh brought it forth gushing from the womb” (Hartley, 496). [cited in Sam Storms, Job]

Cf. Bildad in 26:7, who said that God “hung the earth in empty space.”

Psalm 24:2 For He has founded it upon the seas And established it upon the rivers.

Psalm 89:11 The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all it contains, You have founded them.

Psalm 102:25 “Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

Psalm 104:5 He established the earth upon its foundations, So that it will not totter forever and ever.

Proverbs 3:19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, By understanding He established the heavens.

Isaiah 48:13 “Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together.

Isaiah 51:13 That you have forgotten the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth, That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, As he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor?

Isaiah 51:16 “I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’ ”

Zechariah 12:1 The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,

Or who stretched the line upon it gives a picture of calculated measurements being made to assure the exactness of the construction. For the use of the measuring line see also Jeremiah 31:39; Zechariah 1:16. Stretched is the same verb used in 9:8, where Job says of God, “who alone stretched out the heavens.” Stretching a line or cord between fixed points is the preliminary task in construction, equivalent to surveying to get the angles square and the sides straight. [UBS Handbook]

To stretch out a measuring line is a first step in construction of an edifice: Cf. Zech 1:16 of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Zechariah 1:16 ‘Therefore thus says the LORD, “I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it,” declares the LORD of hosts, “and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem.” ’

Jeremiah 31:37 Thus says the LORD, “If the heavens above can be measured And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done,” declares the LORD.

6 “On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone,

Cornerstone being the plumb stone laid on a foundation.

Job was immediately confronted with his insignificance, for he was not present when God created the earth. Since he did not observe what had taken place then, he could not understand it. How could he hope to advise God now? Creating the earth is depicted like constructing a building with a foundation.... dimensions.... a measuring line.... footings, and a cornerstone. When God put the earth into orbit, it was similar to placing parts of a building in place. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Cornerstone used of Christ:

1 Peter 2:6a (note parallels): 6a For it is contained in Scripture: Behold, I lay in Zion a chosen stone, a precious cornerstone . . .

Herein is a demonstration of God as a Master builder. (Cf. cosmological argument - the universe had a beginning). Also, Creator-creature distinction.

Psalm 29 A Psalm of David. 1 Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. 2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array. 3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The God of glory thunders, The LORD is over many waters. 4 The voice of the LORD is powerful, The voice of the LORD is majestic. 5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; Yes, the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. 6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, And Sirion like a young wild ox. 7 The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire. 8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; The LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. 9 The voice of the LORD makes the deer to calve And strips the forests bare; And in His temple everything says, “Glory!” 10 The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever. 11 The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.

Psalm 33:6–9 6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. 9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

Sermon notes from Colossians 1:16 which may be relevant here:

(a) God created "ex nihilo"

To use a Latin term which means "out of nothing"

HEB 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Creation "ex nihilo" (out of nothing). Before God created nothing existed except the eternal Trinity. Nothing! No empty space, no stars, no sun, moon, planets, angels, air, atoms, molecules. Nothing, except the fellowship of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Then God created. Jesus Christ created. And there was. God spoke and matter existed.

Try creating something from nothing. Man creates a piano from wood, ivory, and metal (springs, keys, strings, cabinet). Man created using pre-existing materials.

Man creates a watch out of glass, leather, springs and gears. Try creating a watch out of nothing.

Sit in an empty room and make me a piano. Only God can create ex nihilo.

Jesus as a boy created things out of wood as a carpenter. Jesus as the eternal Second Person of the Trinity created all things out of nothing as almighty God!

(3) visible and invisible

the visible and the invisible,

(a) cf. verse 15 "invisible" same word

"horatos" means "visible" - adding the alpha privitive makes it "aoratos" meaning "Non-visible."

This is comprehensive: "All things." Things you see and things you don't, whether they be spiritual, microcosmal, or hidden. Anything that exists that isn't God has derived its existence from Him--He created it.

"BY STUDYING THE CREATION, ONE CAN GAIN A GLIMPSE OF THE POWER, KNOWLEDGE, AND WISDOM OF THE CREATOR. The sheer size of the universe is staggering. The sun, for example, has a diameter of 864,000 miles (one hundred times that of earth's) and could hold 1.3 million planets the size of earth inside it. The star Betelgeuse, however, has a diameter of 100 million miles, which is larger than the earth's orbit around the sun. It takes sunlight, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, about 8.5 minutes to reach earth. Yet that same light would take more than four years to reach the nearest star, Alpha Centauri,

some 24 trillion miles from earth. The galaxy to which our sun belongs, the Milky Way, contains hundreds of billions of stars. And astronomers estimate there are millions, or even billions of galaxies. What they can see leads them to estimate the number of stars in the universe at 10²⁵. That is roughly the number of all the grains of sand on all the world's beaches.

THE UNIVERSE ALSO BEARS WITNESS TO THE TREMENDOUS WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF ITS CREATOR. Scientist now speak of the Anthropic Principle, which states that the universe appears to be carefully designed for the well-being of mankind. A change in the rate of earth's rotation around the sun or on its axis would be catastrophic. The earth would become either too hot or too cold to support life. If the moon were much nearer to the earth, huge tides would inundate the continents. A change in the composition of the gasses that make up our atmosphere would also be fatal to life. A slight change in the mass of the proton would result in the dissolution of hydrogen atoms. That would result in the destruction of the universe, because hydrogen is its dominant element.

THE CREATION GIVES MUTE TESTIMONY TO THE INTELLIGENCE OF ITS CREATOR. Max Planck, winner of the Nobel Prize and one of the founders of modern physics, wrote:

According to everything taught by the exact sciences about the immense realm of nature, a certain order prevails--one independent of the human mind . . . this order can be formulated in terms of purposeful activity. There is evidence of an intelligent order of the universe to which both man and nature are subservient.

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands (Psa. 19:1).

ROM 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

b. thrones/powers/rulers/authorities

whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

(1) What are they?

What are thrones, powers, rulers, authorities? Four classes of angelic beings. Can be holy or evil angels.

(2) Colossian errorists

Would be of special interest to the Colossian errorists, Jew and Greek--both of them--both had their own special categorizations and ranks of angels. They worshipped angels (2:18). They contended that X was one of the higher angels.

Paul mentions 4 here but this is not an exhaustive list, don't think there is any special hierarchy here. Wouldn't build a theology of angels on this verse.

Paul is simply saying that JC is the creator of all the angels of heaven and hell. Since they find their being in Him, He is not one of them.

"Thrones" (thronos, lit. throne) refers to the authority that angels have from God as his special messengers.

"kuriote_s" (lordship, dominion). "Powers" refers to the super-human power and strength of angels (2 Peter 2:11) as well as the power they have to conduct God's business.

rulers may have reference to ruling or governing angels. Mentioned in Eph. 3:10, 6:12, as well as Col. 2:15.

authorities = Another reference to the authority that angels have.

COL 2:10 . . . He is the head over all rulers and authorities;

COL 2:15 . . . He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, [and] made a public display of them, having triumphed over them . . .

Jesus Christ may have been a messenger of God, but He was no angelic being. To maintain that he is simply one of the higher angels is a heresy that originated in this first century attack on the Colossian church.

BTW, this heresy continues today in a little different form by the JW's.

"As chief of the angels and next to the Father, he was known as the Archangel, whose name, Michael, signifies, 'Who as God' or God's representative." [C.T. Russell]

"Being the only begotten Son of God. . . the Word would be a prince among all other creatures. In this office he bore another name in heaven, which name is 'Michael.'" [The Truth Shall Make You Free, 49]

c. Cf. Hebrews 1:5-13

3. Summation — Paul sums up in the last sentence of v. 16:

All things have been created by Him and for Him.

a. Perfect tense of the verb "ktizo_"

PT = refers to something that has happened in the past with present ramifications. Someone asks, "Do you want dinner?" "I HAVE eaten."

Here: "all things have been created by Him." They have been created and they continue to exist for our benefit and God's.

b. For Him

AND FOR HIM.

God doesn't exist for us; we exist for Him.

Bad theology comes from this notion that God exists for our benefit. Root of Arminianism; root of the health-wealth heresy. Root of selfish, self-serving X'nty.

The Creation is for Him. God doesn't exist for us; we exist for Him. He doesn't exist to serve us, we serve Him. He doesn't exist to please us, we please him.

Whenever we reap the benefit of our existing for God, that's grace! It's grace because it's totally undeserved!

[B. As Creator (16)]

He didn't just create and step aside. He remains actively involved in the creation. He is transcendent in that He stands apart and away from His creation, but He is also immanent in that He is intimately involved with every detail of His creation. His sustains creation.

C. As Sustainer (17)

1. He is before all things

And He is before all things

a. Meaning? ("pro")

What does it mean that X is "before" all things? Preposition "pro" means "before." Can mean "before" in time/chronological (before this happened). Can mean "before" in place/positional (I am before you - sense of rank).

In a sense, it is nearly syn. with "first-born" in v. 15, except "pro" can have more of a time element to it.

To say that X is before all things means that He is highest in rank above all things. And it means that He is the creator of all things. He exists eternally as the 2d person of the Trinity We can not say with the heretic Arius of the 4th c. that, "there was a time when He was not."

Let your imagination go back hundreds, thousands, millions, or billions of years and He was. Back into eternity past: He was. He always was, He is, and He always will be!

PSA 90:2 Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS

MIC 5:2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {Too} little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From
the days of eternity." HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS

REV 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon
me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS.

He is the Alpha and the Omega of Rev. 22:13.
He is the great I Am of John 8:58.

"Christ is a flower, but he fadeth not; he is a river, but he is never dry; he is a sun, but he
knoweth no eclipse; he is all in all, but he is something more than all." [Spurgeon]

2. He upholds all things

and in Him all things hold together.

a. "suniste_mi"

"Not only did Jesus create the universe, He also sustains it. He maintains the delicate balance
necessary to life's existence. He quite literally holds all things together. He is the power behind
every consistency in the universe. He is gravity and centrifugal and centripetal force. He is the
One who keeps all the entities in space in their motion." [MacArthur, 49]

In his book *The Atom Speaks*, Dr. Lee Chesnut describes the puzzle of why the nucleus of the
atom holds together:

"Consider the dilemma of the nuclear physicist when he finally looks in utter amazement at the
pattern he had now drawn of the oxygen nucleus. . . . For here are eight positively charged
protons closely associated together within the confines of this tiny nucleus. With them are eight
neutrons--a total of sixteen particles--eight positively charged, eight with no charge.

Earlier physicists had discovered that like charges of electricity and like magnetic poles repel
each other, and unlike charges or magnetic poles attract each other. And the entire history of
electrical phenomena and electrical equipment had been built up on these principles known as
Coulomb's law of electrostatic force and the law of magnetism. What was wrong? What holds
the nucleus together? Why doesn't it fly apart? And therefore, why do not all atoms fly apart?"

BTW, later experiments gave scientists a glimpse of an incredible force that held protons
together within the nucleus of the atom. They named it, "Strong Nuclear Force." But they have
no explanation for why it exists.

This led the physicist George Gamow to write:

"The fact that we live in a world in which practically every object is a potential nuclear explosive, without being blown to bits, is due to the extreme difficulties that attend the starting of a nuclear reaction." [Ibid]

Karl K. Darrow, a physicist at the Bell (AT&T) Laboratories, agrees:

"You grasp what that implies. It implies that all the massive nuclei have no right to be alive at all. Indeed, they should never have been created, and, if created, they should have blown up instantly. Yet here they all are. . . . Some inflexible inhibition is holding them relentlessly together. The nature of the inhibition is also a secret . . . one thus far reserved by Nature for herself."

It is no secret! It's right here!

He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.

The early church father Athanasius, who was at the forefront of the battle against the heresy of Arianism in the 4th c. He was a staunch defender of the person of Jesus Christ. Reflecting on this very passage we studied, Athanasius wrote some 1600 years ago:

"He, the all-powerful, all-holy Word of the Father, spreads His power over all things everywhere, enlightening things seen and unseen, holding and binding all together in Himself. Nothing is left empty of His presence. But to all things and through all, severally and collectively, He is the giver and sustainer of life. He, the Wisdom of God, holds the universe in tune together. He it is who, binding all with each, and ordering all things by His will and pleasure, produces the perfect unity of nature and the harmonious reign of law."

What a God we serve! He is big enough to hold the entire universe in its course, yet compassionate enough to supply our every need.

7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

From Ezra 3:10–11 it is known, for example, that the laying of the foundation of the Second Temple was accompanied by celebrations and music. The same is referred to in Zechariah 4:7 on the occasion of the laying of the capstone. So here the laying of the foundation of the earth is accompanied by singing. . . . Before the creation of man it is the stars which witness the creation of the earth, and are said to sing together, that is, in chorus. [UBS Handbook]

“Morning stars” referring to the angels, or figurative use as in Luke 19:40:

Some see a parallelism here that would make “morning stars” synonymous with “angels” and thus figurative. [Robert L. Alden]

Job was absent when the morning stars (possibly Venus and Mercury; “morning stars” were mentioned by Job in 3:9) sang and the angels (lit., “the sons of God”; cf. 1:6; 2:1) shouted with joy over God’s Creation of the earth. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

“The morning stars” probably included the planet Venus (called Hesperus), which makes a regular morning and evening appearance. [Robert L. Alden]

Sometimes skeptics will point to the vastness of the universe as a reason to doubt God’s existence, citing the fact that we are but a speck of dust compared to the seemingly infinite creation. The argument being all that space is wasted. However, that assumes that the universe was created for only for man. It wasn’t. It was created for all of the unseen realm, angelic beings. It was created for God’s pleasure. It was created for God’s glory.

My conclusion is that God’s own glory is uppermost in His own affections. In everything He does, His purpose is to preserve and display that glory. To say that His own glory is uppermost in His own affections means that He puts a greater value on it than on anything else. He delights in His glory above all things.

Glory is not easy to define. It is like beauty. How would you define beauty? Some things we have to point at rather than define. But let me try. God’s glory is the beauty of His manifold perfections. It can refer to the bright and awesome radiance that sometimes breaks forth in visible manifestations. Or it can refer to the infinite moral excellence of His character. In either case it signifies a reality of infinite greatness and worth. C. S. Lewis helps us with his own effort to point at it:

Nature never taught me that there exists a God of glory and of infinite majesty. I had to learn that in other ways. But nature gave the word glory a meaning for me. I still do not know where else I could have found one. I do not see how the “fear” of God could have ever meant to me anything but the lowest prudential efforts to be safe, if I had never seen certain ominous ravines and unapproachable crags.

God’s ultimate goal therefore is to preserve and display His infinite and awesome greatness and worth, that is, His glory. John Piper, *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 41–42.

In Psalm 148:2–3 angels and stars are together commanded to praise the Lord.

The details of v. 7 remind us that we are dealing with a nature poem and not a treatise on geology. Literalists who press the details of this and any of the other segments of these chapters will immediately discover irreconcilable difficulties. The best advice is be poetic as you read. Position yourself thousands of years ago in the steppes of Transjordan, standing in the maelstrom and listening to an awesome voice coming through the wind. It is musical; it is impressive; it is scary but wonderful. [Robert L. Alden]

“Sons of God” occurs in 1:6 and refers to God’s heavenly court.

Here we have additional information that presents them as parallel to “the morning stars.” This association between the members of the divine council and the stars also occurs in ancient Near Eastern literature,⁹ in which the gods are considered celestial bodies, the celestial bodies are considered images of the gods, and the celestial bodies are considered to have a divine nature.¹⁰ In Ugaritic texts, the “sons of El” or “sons of the gods” are parallel to the “assembly of the stars.”¹¹ In this way, Yahweh’s speech reflects common thinking in the ancient world. The difference is that in Israelite theology, the divine council (= sons of God = heavenly host = stars) is not composed of gods with whom Yahweh shares divine authority, though he may at times delegate tasks to them.¹² [[John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 400–401]]

Sermon notes on 1:6:

A. The Council (6)

1. That’s the picture being painted here: A celestial council

OT scholar John Walton:

On the basis of [the] biblical and ancient Near Eastern background, we can conclude that Job 1 features a gathering of the divine council as the sons of God come together to give their reports and to do the work of heaven. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 63]

Similar picture in Psalm 89 ==>

Psalm 89:5–7 5 The heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. 6 For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD, 7 A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, And awesome above all those who are around Him?

Similar thing here in v. 7 — pic. of a council gathered in heaven singing for joy.

Milton’s lines, “Such music (as ’tis said) / Before was never made, / But when of old the sons of morning sung, / While the Creator great / His constellations set, / And the well-ballanc’t world on hinges hung, / And cast the dark foundations deep, / And bid the welt’ring waves their oozy channel keep” (*Hymn on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity* [1645], lines 89–96). [David J. A. Clines]

God clearly asserts his absolute sovereignty over all of creation. He knows and controls every square inch of the universe, whether animate or inanimate. No snowflake or drop of

rain escapes his providence. Every force of nature and every living thing within it are subject to his purposes. Such being the case with God's relation to nature, it stands to reason that he cares even more for those created in his image. It now seems ludicrous that a mere creature like Job would demand explanations from God. If Job cannot comprehend or control creation, what makes him think he can comprehend God's control of mankind? [Sam Storms, *Biblical Studies: Job* (Edmond, OK: Sam Storms, 2016), Job 40:3–5]

VERSES 38:8-11

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

8 “Or who enclosed the sea with doors when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; 9 when I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and I placed boundaries on it and set a bolt and doors, 11 and I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves stop’?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

8 “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

8 Who enclosed the sea behind doors when it burst from the womb, 9 when I made the clouds its garment and thick darkness its blanket, 10 when I determined its boundaries and put its bars and doors in place, 11 when I declared: “You may come this far, but no farther; your proud waves stop here”?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

8 “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, 9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, 10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, 11 when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt’?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

These 4 vv. form one long sentence in Hebrew.

8 **“Or who enclosed the sea with doors when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;**

Storms and seas were associated with dread, darkness, chaos, death, evil. Cf. Rev. 21:1.

For desert people who were not seafaring the limitless expanse of water was not inviting but fearful. Few Old Testament characters had anything to do with sailing, fishing, or swimming. The sea was something God held back from overflowing the land. [Robert L. Alden]

Shut translates the word rendered as “hedge” in 1:10 and 3:23. Doors translates a word referring to the two leaves of a door; that is, a door made of a pair of boards. Doors is

used figuratively and refers to the seashore or any natural barrier that keeps the sea from flooding the land. Similar thoughts are expressed in Psalm 104:9; Proverbs 8:29; Jeremiah 5:22. [UBS Handbook]

The origin of the earth was depicted as being like the construction of a building (vv. 4–7); the origin of the oceans was described like childbirth. Job was not in God’s obstetric delivery room when He created the oceans, seas, and lakes, which were like a baby coming from a womb (cf. v. 29). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Suggests the bursting of the waters in child birth, “waters in the womb which protect the fetus, or unborn baby.” [UBS Handbook]

9 when I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band,

More “birth” imagery.

When I made clouds its garment continues the metaphor of birth, and this line depicts the clouds as being the clothing for the sea, which is the infant. . . . The noun translated as swaddling band is found only here in the Old Testament. However, the verb is used in Ezekiel 16:4. The allusion is to wrapping a new born infant with strips of cloth to keep its limbs straight. The same was applied to the baby Jesus in Luke 2:7. [UBS Handbook]

The sea is like a newborn child, conceived “behind doors” (v. 8), emerging “from the womb” (v. 8), and now “dressed” in a “garment” of “clouds” and “wrapped in the swaddling clothes”⁹ of “darkness.” The sea is not the hostile monster whom the supreme god must subdue but part of Yahweh’s created dominion, submissive to his will. [Robert L. Alden]

10 and I placed boundaries on it and set a bolt and doors, 11 and I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves stop’?

God confined the waters, His newborn, by means of shorelines (shut . . . behind doors . . . fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars [as on a city gate] in place). The waters could no longer cover the entire globe as they had done (cf. Gen. 1:2, 9; Ps. 104:9). God separated the waters on the globe from the land; also above the earth’s waters He placed the clouds (cf. Gen. 1:6) which like a baby’s garment (cf. Job 38:14), shroud the earth’s waters at night in thick darkness. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Picture a wild ocean coastline, with huge waves crashing against the cliffs under dark brooding skies, with wild winds and storm clouds. How are we—how is Job—to think of this symbol of all that has made his life a misery? With a strange dark humor, we are invited to think of this sea as being like a baby! Picture the breaking of the mother’s waters at the end of pregnancy, and then her baby bursting out of the womb on its day of

birth and causing havoc from that day on. . . . But here is a baby who is put in clothing and a “swaddling band” to restrain him (v. 9). and then put in some kind of playpen so that he cannot roam free and cause chaos everywhere (v. 10).” [Ash, 380]

Bars refers to the iron bars laid across the inside of a pair of double doors to prevent them from being pushed open, or as TEV says, “bolted gates.” [UBS Handbook]

Genesis 1:6–10 6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. 8 God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. 9 Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. 10 God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.

Proverbs 8:29 When He set for the sea its boundary So that the water would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth;

Jeremiah 5:22 ‘Do you not fear Me?’ declares the LORD. ‘Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, An eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.

Psalms 104:5–9 5 He established the earth upon its foundations, So that it will not totter forever and ever. 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; The waters were standing above the mountains. 7 At Your rebuke they fled, At the sound of Your thunder they hurried away. 8 The mountains rose; the valleys sank down To the place which You established for them. 9 You set a boundary that they may not pass over, So that they will not return to cover the earth.

Note this is a long question.

While the focus here is on organization, the creation was ex nihilo (cf. the creation account in Genesis and Hebrews 11:3).

God’s control over all things (including Job’s life).

VERSES 38:12-15

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

12 “Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13 that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 “It is changed like clay under the seal; and they stand forth like a garment. 15 “From the wicked their light is withheld, and the uplifted arm is broken.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

12 “Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13 that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. 15 From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

12 Have you ever in your life commanded the morning or assigned the dawn its place, 13 so it may seize the edges of the earth and shake the wicked out of it? 14 The earth is changed as clay is by a seal; its hills stand out like the folds of a garment. 15 Light is withheld from the wicked, and the arm raised in violence is broken.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

12 “Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, 13 that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? 14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment. 15 The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Throughout these vv. is seen the use of rhetorical questions that assume a “no” answer.

In this third four-line strophe, after the creation of the universe as a whole (vv 4–7), and the ordering of it by the control of the unruly waters (vv 8–11), we move to the daily renewal of creation with the assignment of the morning to its place, every morning being an image of the morning of creation in miniature. [David J. A. Clines]

This is contra the god of deism.

12 “Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place,

Picturing God as a General. Cf. earlier outline points:

(1) Creation (38:4-7)

- (a) God is the architect (4-5a)
- (b) God is the surveyor (v 5b)
- (c) God is the engineer (v 6)
- (d) God's Work Applauded by Angels (7)

Even as a parent of a new-born (vv. 8-11)

13 that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 "It is changed like clay under the seal; and they stand forth like a garment. 15 "From the wicked their light is withheld, and the uplifted arm is broken.

Cf. NIV:

12 "Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, 13 that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? 14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment. 15 The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken.

The dawn causes the wicked, who are active at night (cf. 24:14–17; John 3:19), to hide. It is as if the morning light were shaking them out of a blanket (Job 38:13), causing them to be broken in their power (upraised arm, v. 15; cf. 40:9). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

See Job 24:13–17 (and my notes there):

13 "Others have been with those who rebel against the light; They do not want to know its ways Nor abide in its paths. 14 "The murderer arises at dawn; He kills the poor and the needy, And at night he is as a thief. 15 "The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, Saying, 'No eye will see me.' And he disguises his face. 16 "In the dark they dig into houses, They shut themselves up by day; They do not know the light. 17 "For the morning is the same to him as thick darkness, For he is familiar with the terrors of thick darkness.

Caused the dawn reminds Job that in 3:7–9 he wanted to impose a curse on the dawn to prevent it from seeing the light of day.

The poetic picture is the dawn reaching out to the edges of the earth, as though it were a blanket or garment, and shaking the wicked out. [UBS Handbook]

It is changed like clay under the seal describes by analogy how the darkened earth of verse 13 changes as dawn progresses into day. It is the appearance of the earth that changes. The analogy may be to a smooth piece of clay that takes on a definite shape when impressed with a seal, or signet ring. The expression translated as clay under the seal is literally "like clay a seal." Dhorme takes it to refer to a red-colored clay used in ancient medicine, and which is used here to suggest the pink color of the earth at sunrise. [UBS Handbook Series]

Just as a seal stamps on a flat and featureless piece of clay a design in relief, so the light of the morning changes the featureless dark earth: what in the darkness had no shape becomes three-dimensional, contoured features appear, and the landscape takes on its varied colors. [David J. A. Clines]

“their uplifted arm is broken” = the wicked are unable to carry out their violent acts because the daylight has come.

Verse 13 points to that phenomenon familiar to every watcher of a sunrise. As the day grows brighter, evil doers¹² who love darkness and practice their crimes under its cover find themselves looking for places to hide. As a bright light scatters cockroaches, so each new day presents a threat to the murderers, adulterers, and burglars that Job mentioned in 24:14–17. [Robert L. Alden]

A mythological scene is here depicted, in which the high deity summons the lesser (male) deity Dawn to take its station and bring the new day into being. Dawn (שחר, šaḥar) is known from the Ugaritic texts as one of the two “beautiful and gracious gods,” Dawn and Dusk. For Job to assign Dawn to its prescribed post “would mean that he knew the ordering principle ... which established the ‘place’ of each component in the cosmos” (Habel). Has he ever in his life played such a part in the life of the world? [David J. A. Clines]

So in verse 14 the Lord pictures that beautiful scene when you watch a dark landscape appear as first light dawns. From a gray two-dimensional nothingness, it takes shape, rather as flat clay becomes three-dimensional when impressed with a seal, and its features become visible, and it has color and texture like a piece of clothing. What is the point and purpose of all this? The paradoxical “light,” (v.15) of the wicked (which is darkness, for darkness is their preferred environment, and “deep darkness is morning to all of them: for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness,” 24:17) is “withheld” and the arm they lift up to threaten and harm is broken. All of which is a vivid poetic way of saying that every time the sunrises, it is evidence that there is a judgment to come. Every time the light is switched on in creation reassures us that darkness will not last forever. Each new day is cosmic proof that evil has no enduring place in the created order. Sure, it must be part of this creation for now; it has a place in God's purposes, albeit a strictly limited one. But it will not be with us forever. There will come a day when the sea (in this symbolic sense) will be no more (Revelation 21:1). The wheat and the weeds may need to grow together for the present; but the day of judgment will come, when the weeds will be burned and the wheat gathered into God's barns (Matthew 13 :24-30). [Ash, 382]

Therefore, God sets before Job a vivid metaphorical portrait of the glories of the universe — a good creation that has been tainted by evil. God has a purpose for that evil to exist for a time; only a time. Then that which began at the Cross will be consummated in final judgment and glory.

VERSES 38:16-17

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

16 “Have you entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 “Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

16 “Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

16 Have you traveled to the sources of the sea or walked in the depths of the oceans? 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you seen the gates of deep darkness?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

16 “Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

There is a progression starting in v. 16 of entering the deepest parts of the earth, beginning with the sea and culminating in Sheol. Note modern deep sea exploration and “going boldly where no man has gone before.”

16 “Have you entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 “Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?”

Note the parallelism:

16 “Have you entered into the springs of the sea
or walked in the recesses of the deep?”

17 “Have the gates of death been revealed to you,
or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?”

(the Heb. word for “springs,” *nēbek*, occurring only here in the OT, probably refers to springs of water pouring into oceans from the ocean floors), [The Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Or walked in the recesses of the deep: recesses translates a word used in 11:7, “deep things,” and has the sense of “something to be explored, researched, discovered, investigated,” and so it implies here “to find out what is hidden.” [UBS Handbook]

11:7 “Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?”

Death is pictured as having gates which open for its entrants (cf. Pss. 9:13; 107:18; Isa. 38:10).

“The gates of death,” Isa 38:10; Jonah 2:6 [7]; Pss 9:13 [14]; 107:18; Matt 16:18. Cf. the King of Terrors (18:14).

Have the gates of death been revealed to you asks if Job has been shown the entrance to the world of the dead, or Sheol. Gates of death is found in Psalm 9:13; 107:18, and “gates of Sheol” in Isaiah 38:10. Gates of death are not gates that belong to death, but rather gates that mark the entrance to such a place.

The two lines of this verse are parallel in meaning. In line b gates in gates of deep darkness is the same word as in line a. Deep darkness is used in 3:5 and refers to the darkness of Sheol. That the world of the dead is thought of as a dark place is emphasized by Job in 10:21, 22. [UBS Handbook Series]

In the Babylonian underworld, the realm of the dead was a city with seven gates, built upon the ocean that surrounds and supports the earth . . . [David J. A. Clines]

Note that we intuitively look up for heaven, down for hell. Why? People are buried in the ground, or caves, or mausoleums, where it is dark. This isn't the reality of where spatially heaven and hell are Note Jesus ascending to heaven in Acts 1 . . . Representation, not myth.

God's knowledge — his presence — reach to the deepest seas, the furthest space, and even to the depths of Hades and heights of heaven. Psalm 139.

VERSES 38:18

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

18 “Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

18 Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

18 Have you comprehended the extent of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

18 Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

18 **“Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this.**

“all this” = “all that has been asked so far.”

We may have grown in our understanding of the expanse of the earth, and similar. But at that time there was much scientific ignorance.

From God’s celestial perspective, somewhat analogous to the astronauts’ view from the moon, the entire globe can be seen at once. To the earthbound Job such a viewpoint was unimaginable. He may have traveled a hundred miles or more, but still he was far from “understanding/comprehending” what was beyond the last mountain range or desert he had seen at the most distant point of his travels. [Robert L. Alden]

The greatest depth measured so far is in the Pacific Ocean—35,810 feet or 6.78 miles.) And as for the reaches of space, Voyager 2 spent twelve years going 4.4 billion miles . . . [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 146]

However, *expanse* may refer to the depths of the earth that reach to Sheol (v. 17). Cf. Ash, 383.

VERSES 38:19-21

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

19 “Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, 20 that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? 21 “You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

19 “Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, 20 that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? 21 You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

19 Where is the road to the home of light? Do you know where darkness lives, 20 so you can lead it back to its border? Are you familiar with the paths to its home? 21 Don’t you know? You were already born; you have lived so long!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

19 “What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? 20 Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? 21 Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years!

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

19 “Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, 20 that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home?”

Light and darkness personified as having homes. Each comes from its dwelling to which it returns.

Like wisdom and folly, depicted in Prov 9 as women, whose houses can be reached by following certain roads, so “light” and “darkness” are personified and understood to have “places” and “dwellings.” [Robert L. Alden]

21 “You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!

Eliphaz in 15:7 - “Were you the first man to be born, Or were you brought forth before the hills?”

Cf. v 4: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?”

VERSES 38:22-23

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

22 “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
23 which I have reserved for the time of distress, for the day of war and battle?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

22 “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
23 which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

22 Have you entered the place where the snow is stored? Or have you seen the storehouses of
hail, 23 which I hold in reserve for times of trouble, for the day of warfare and battle?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

22 “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail, 23 which I
reserve for times of trouble, for days of war and battle?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**22 “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the
hail, 23 which I have reserved for the time of distress, for the day of war and battle?”**

Job had no idea how God makes snow or hail, pictured as if they were kept in storehouses (cf. Pss. 33:7; 135:7; Jer. 10:13) and released by God when He chooses. Causing hail in battle (cf. Josh. 10:11) is an example of what Elihu had said about God’s using elements of weather to stop people from working (Job 37:6–7), or to punish people (37:13). Job could not predict where God would dispense lightning flashes (cf. Elihu’s words along this line in 36:30, 32; 37:3, 11, 15; cf. 38:35) or where the winds would blow. [The Bible Knowledge Commentary]

The day of battle and war makes specific what is meant by the parallel time of trouble in line a. God threw hailstones down on the Amorites in Joshua 10:11 as they fled from Israel. Battle and war appear to be a fixed pair of expressions. No attempt is made to distinguish these as different kinds of events. In some languages it may be necessary to adjust verse 23 to say, for example, “I have kept them stored up in case of troubles when there is a war” or “I keep them stored for the times when people fight and have wars.” [UBS Handbook]

Hail appears as an instrument of divine punishment against evildoers (Isa 28:17; Ezek 13:11, 13; Eccles 39:29), against crops (Exod 9:22; Hg 2:17), and against enemies (Josh 10:11; Isa 30:30; Rev 8:7; 11:19; 16:21). It is an accompaniment of a theophany in Isa 30:30; Ps 18:12–13 (13–14). [David J. A. Clines]

Hail in particular is a weapon God used to fight for his people. It was the seventh plague that fell on Egypt to help persuade the pharaoh to let Israel go free (Exod 9:22–26). “The LORD hurled large hailstones” on the fleeing Amorites in Josh 10:11. The prophets predicted that God would use these icy missiles to press home his lessons and punish the presumptuous (Isa 30:30; Ezek 13:11), and hundred pound hailstones are recorded in Rev 16:21 as part of the plague of the seventh angel. [Robert L. Alden]

If you think snow can't be a messenger of judgment, as Napoleon or Hitler who suffered great losses in the frigid snow of Russia.

We have no remedy to quell dangerous snow storms, floods, or drought. All of this is under God's sov. control.

VERSES 38:24

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

24 “Where is the way that the light is divided, or the east wind scattered on the earth?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

24 What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

24 What road leads to the place where light is dispersed? Where is the source of the east wind that spreads across the earth?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

24 What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

24 “Where is the way that the light is divided, or the east wind scattered on the earth?”

NIV takes “light” to mean “lightening:” “What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?”

The Hebrew word translated as light has been changed in many different ways to produce a line that is more clearly parallel with the next line. Dhorme and others change light to get “mist.” TEV understands light to refer to the sun, and then translates it distributed as “comes up.” This may be the intention of the poet, but the Hebrew does not suggest it. NIV may be closer by taking light to refer to “lightning,” as was the case in 36:30 and 32, “What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed,” that is, “sent out.” The line may also be rendered as “Do you know how to find the place where I send out the lightning?” or “Do you know how to go to where I cause the lightning to flash?” [UBS Handbook]

East wind translates the same word as in 15:2 and 27:21. The reference is to the scorching winds that blow across the desert from the east. [UBS Handbook]

In this context “the light” of v. 24 seems to be the lightnings that come down from Heaven, and “the east wind” means a stormy wind that comes at the same time (v. 24).

Together we are given a picture of destruction unleashed on the world from above. [Ash, 385]

Cf. the Flood.

VERSES 38:25-27

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

25 “Who has cleft a channel for the flood, or a way for the thunderbolt, 26 to bring rain on a land without people, on a desert without a man in it, 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land and to make the seeds of grass to sprout?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

25 “Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, 26 to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man, 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

25 Who cuts a channel for the flooding rain or clears the way for lightning, 26 to bring rain on an uninhabited land, on a desert with no human life, 27 to satisfy the parched wasteland and cause the grass to sprout?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

25 Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, 26 to water a land where no one lives, an uninhabited desert, 27 to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

25 “Who has cleft a channel for the flood, or a way for the thunderbolt,

The idea of a “channel” forms a transition from the storehouses of vv 22–24 to the atmospheric or meteorological phenomena of the next four strophes (the rainstorm and thunderbolt in vv 25–27, the various kinds of moisture in vv 28–30, the influences of the stars on the seasons of the year in vv 31–33, and the clouds with their rains and lightnings in vv 34–38). [David J. A. Clines]

This metaphorical channel, the path that the rain takes through the atmosphere, links heaven and earth. The term (תעלה) elsewhere always refers literally to a watercourse in the earth (e.g., 2 Kgs 18:17; Isa 7:3) or a trench (1 Kgs 18:32). It is a strange term to use of rain, which of course falls in drops rather than as an unbroken stream, but that is just the point: the focus here is on the rainstorm, the “downpour” or “flood” . . . [David J. A. Clines]

Channel here is the path rain takes from the clouds to its appointed terminus on the ground. Cf. 28:26.

26 to bring rain on a land without people, on a desert without a man in it, 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land and to make the seeds of grass to sprout?

This is a single sentence in Hebrew.

Verse 25 gives a question while vv 26 and 27 extend the question to purposes. All three vv refer to God's activity in sending rain.

Verse 25 nasb has "flood" whereas other transl. include/have "rain."

Flood seems to be the dominant use of the word:

2373a שֶׁטֶף (šēṭep) flood, downpour.

The meaning "to overflow, engulf" accounts for the majority of the uses of šāṭap. [Victor P. Hamilton, "2373 שֶׁטֶף," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 918]

Torrents of rain translates a noun based on a verb meaning "to flood." These are rains which are so heavy that they cause flooding, and so "downpours, pouring rains, torrential rains." [UBS Handbook]

Cf. compromise of the HCSB ("flooding rain")

Even if no man is there, God sends his rain to water the grasses (and sustain wildlife). Cf. Matt. 6:30. God does this for his pleasure.

In "distant deserts millions of flowers [wil1] bloom, blush with vivid colors, give off a sweet fragrance and never be touched or seen or smelled by anybody but God! God, it seems, wanted Job to think about this very thing. . . . Creation praises God by simply being what it was created to be in all its incredible variety. And since most of the creation is beyond the awareness of mankind (in the reaches of space, and in the heights of mountains and at the bottom of the sea) it wasn't created merely to serve purposes that have to do with us. It was created for the enjoyment of God. . . .

One of the tragedies of growing up is that we get used to things. . . . What a wonderful experience it is when God grants us a moment in which we don't take anything for granted, but see the world as though it was invented yesterday. . . . We should pray for the eyes of children again, when they saw everything for the first time....These are the eyes we need to see the unending wisdom of God running through all the world." [John Piper, cited in Talbert, 207]

Acts 14:17 and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

VERSES 38:28-30

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

28 “Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29 “From whose womb has come the ice? And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth? 30 “Water becomes hard like stone, and the surface of the deep is imprisoned.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

28 “Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29 From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? 30 The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

28 Does the rain have a father? Who fathered the drops of dew? 29 Whose womb did the ice come from? Who gave birth to the frost of heaven 30 when water becomes as hard as stone, and the surface of the watery depths is frozen?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

28 Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew? 29 From whose womb comes the ice? Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens 30 when the waters become hard as stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

28 “Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29 “From whose womb has come the ice? And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth? 30 “Water becomes hard like stone, and the surface of the deep is imprisoned.

Note the role of father (28a) and mother (28b-29) in this analogy. This is contra ancient paganism.

This may possibly be an allusion to and a polemic against the Canaanite myth that viewed rain as the semen of the gods, by which “mother earth” supposedly bears her “children,” the crops. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Jeremiah 14:22 Are there any among the idols of the nations who give rain? Or can the heavens grant showers? Is it not You, O LORD our God? Therefore we hope in You, For You are the one who has done all these things.

In the ancient Near East and Greece there is a strong tradition of theogony (birth of the gods as natural elements of the universe). The Babylonian epic of creation commences with the divine natural elements all generated from a watery mist (Tiamat). These natural elements in turn generated other divine natural forms. Similar imagery is found in Greece in Hesiod's Theogony. It is difficult to determine whether the verse here discounts this view or is just indicating Job's ignorance of the answer. Canaanite literature knew of Pidrya, daughter of mist, and Taliya, daughter of showers in the Ugaritic Epic of Baal. In Mesopotamian literature, dew is sometimes seen as coming from the stars. Shamash, the sun god, is seen as the one who provides dew, mist and ice. [Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Job 38:28–29]

Cf. 38:8-9 for previous birth imagery.

VERSES 38:31-33

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

31 “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? 32 “Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, and guide the Bear with her satellites? 33 “Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, or fix their rule over the earth?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

31 “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? 32 Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? 33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

31 Can you fasten the chains of the Pleiades or loosen the belt of Orion? 32 Can you bring out the constellations in their season and lead the Bear and her cubs? 33 Do you know the laws of heaven? Can you impose its authority on earth?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

31 “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt? 32 Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? 33 Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God’s dominion over the earth?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Note that the fact that God asks these questions speaks of man’s unique dignity. Nowhere do we see the creation asked questions about the creation aside from man.

31 “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?”

Mesopotamian cosmology held that the great gods had inscribed the stars and constellations on the underside of the heavenly dome.¹⁵ As throughout this portion of his speech, Yahweh is challenging Job about his understanding of, or ability to perform, the deeds normally associated with deity. As the Babylonian text *Enuma anu Enlil* shows, the constellations and their movements were used as a source of omens and could thereby bring favor or disaster. These verses accordingly ask whether Job is able to bring about justice through the manipulation of constellations that theoretically determine fortunes on earth. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 402]

The questions now shift to the constellations of the stars. Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades: bind renders a verb meaning “to tie, knot together,” and so the question refers to

tying up the seven stars of the cluster called the Pleiades to keep them together in a group. [UBS Handbook]

Also on the fourth day (Gen 1:16) God created the stars. With clear skies fully half the year, desert dwellers made a study of the stars and constellations. These verses serve both as an apologetic for the uniqueness of God, as opposed to multiple celestial deities, and as proof of his creative artistry and control of all things terrestrial and celestial. [Robert L. Alden]

But the three constellations that can be identified with some certainty (the Pleiades, Orion, and Aldebaran) are all connected with the coming of rains, so they may well owe their presence here to their importance for the supply of water on earth; and the fourth, Mazzaroth, may also be connected with rain (see on v 32). [David J. A. Clines]

Clines later notes that these stars “are the regularities that associate a given constellation with a rainy season.” Cf. vv. 28-30.

The words for the Pleiades and Orion were used in 9:9:

9:7-9 7 Who commands the sun not to shine, And sets a seal upon the stars; 8 Who alone stretches out the heavens And tramples down the waves of the sea; 9 Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south;

9 Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south;

“All these references to the world around—sun, stars, sea, heaven, and earth—attest to Job’s monotheism. Unlike the neighbors of ancient Israel who attributed each of these domains to separate deities, Job and all the Bible’s authors believed that God “alone” was responsible for their creation and regulation.” [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 125.]

These are constellations . . . The Bear may refer to the Big or Little Dipper. Orion is a constellation located in the winter skies toward the north. The Pleiades is a small cluster of stars located in the shoulder of the bull in the constellation Taurus

The chambers of the south we’re not so sure about. May be the place from which the south winds blow or a general term for the southern stars.

Another commentator suggests: “the ‘chambers of the south’ . . . could refer to the very bright section of the sky from Argus to Centauri that would have been visible on the southern horizon in Israel. It could also refer to the zodiac.

Or loose the cords of Orion puts the question in the reverse sense in regard to Orion. The word translated as cords occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament, but it is related to the verb meaning “to pull,” and so the uncertainty is largely eliminated. It is not clear what the cords of Orion may be, other than a parallel for the similar expression in line a. NEB thinks cords may refer to the three aligned stars that make up Orion’s belt. The Pleiades and Orion are found in the same general area of the night sky, the Pleiades being relatively small and indistinct, while Orion is vast and easily seen. This line may be rendered as in NEB, “or loose Orion’s belt?” [UBS Handbook]

The Pleiades, also often known as the Seven Sisters (though only six are visible to the naked eye), are a cluster of stars in the constellation of Taurus. For observers in the northern hemisphere, like the author of Job, the cluster is above and to the right of Orion the Hunter as one faces south. The brightest Pleiad is Alcyone, 1,000 times more luminous than our own sun would be at the same distance. . . . The constellation of Orion is one of the most easily recognized in the northern sky. In mythology, Orion the Hunter is accompanied by his dogs, Canis Major and Minor. Together they hunt various celestial animals, including Lepus, the rabbit, and Taurus, the bull. Orion’s Belt is formed by three bright stars (known by their Arabic names, Alnitak, Alnilam, and Mintaka) in a straight line. Hanging down from Orion’s belt is his sword that is made up of three fainter stars. [David J. A. Clines]

What does it mean to “bind” (קשר) the Pleiades and “loose” (פתח) Orion’s belt? In cosmogonic terms, it would presumably mean to establish these constellations in their places, clustering the stars of the Pleiades together as with cords or slackening off the belt of Orion. But it does seem that chap. 38 has by now moved on from thoughts of creation to speak of repeated phenomena in the world’s cycles (as, e.g., the storehouses in vv 22–24, the rain in vv 25–27, and the other forms of moisture in vv 28–30). G. R. Driver therefore may well be correct in seeing here the seasonal influences of the stars: the Pleiades are the harbingers of spring and Orion is the herald of winter. To “bind” the Pleiades would thus be, functionally, to check the spring floods that they unleash, and to loose Orion’s belt would be to disable the autumn rains (“Two Astronomical Passages in the Old Testament,” JTS ns 7 [1956] 1–11). De Wilde, on the other hand, followed by Newsom, thinks the binding of the Pleiades refers to their becoming invisible at the beginning of April, when the rainy season is over and the hot season begins. When Orion’s belt is loosed, it is from early July onward, when his arrows of heat and dryness have been discharged over the earth. [David J. A. Clines]

32 “Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, and guide the Bear with her satellites?”

ESV, instead of “consellation” has “the Mazzaroth” — “Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season . . .”

Mazzaroth is the transliteration of a Hebrew word which is much disputed. The word is similar to a word used in 2 Kings 23:5 translated as “constellations” (RSV) and “planets” (TEV), but in the form used here it is found nowhere else. Dhorme translates it as “Corona,” by which he means Corona Borealis, the Latin name of the constellation “Northern Crown.” [UBS Handbook]

Or can you guide the Bear with its children: the Bear, according to Dhorme, refers to the same constellation called by that name in 9:9, although there is a slight difference in the vowels. The Bear translates what is most probably the “Great Bear,” known also by its Latin name Ursa Major, or in English “The Big Dipper.” Its children are then the group of stars known as Ursa Minor, “Little Bear,” also called “The Little Dipper,” which contains Polaris, the North Star. Both of these are northern hemisphere constellations. [UBS Handbook]

Mazzaroth is a name that occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible; it has been variously identified with the Zodiacal circle, with Arcturus, Sirius, Venus, and the Northern Crown (for details, see Note a). In view of the association of the other three stars with the coming of rain, perhaps the best identification is with the Hyades, which are preeminently the harbingers of rain. [David J. A. Clines]

33 **“Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, or fix their rule over the earth?”**

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens inquires if Job knows the laws that control the movements of the heavenly bodies, or as TEV says, “laws that govern the skies.” This may also be expressed in some languages as “Do you know what roads the lights in the sky follow?” or “Do you know the way in which the lights in the sky are controlled?”

Can you establish their rule on the earth: rule translates a word found nowhere else in the Old Testament. It may be related to a root having to do with “writing, or what is written.” In view of this Dhorme translates “Do you fulfill on earth what is written there?” The thought may be that the stars influence events on earth, and this is implied in RSV’s rendering, which means “Can you make the laws in the heavens apply to the earth?” [UBS Handbook]

This all stands against Job’s perception that the world is chaotic and out of control (cf. chap. 24).

Isaiah 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing.

VERSES 38:34-36

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

34 “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that an abundance of water will cover you? 35 “Can you send forth lightnings that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are’? 36 “Who has put wisdom in the innermost being or given understanding to the mind?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

34 “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? 35 Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are’? 36 Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

34 Can you command the clouds so that a flood of water covers you? 35 Can you send out lightning bolts, and they go? Do they report to you: “Here we are”? 36 Who put wisdom in the heart or gave the mind understanding?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

34 “Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water? 35 Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, ‘Here we are’? 36 Who gives the ibis wisdom or gives the rooster understanding?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

In this final strophe about the cosmos, longer than all the others because of its climactic position, we are reminded that what Job cannot do, God can, and does. These verses envisage the falling of rain from the clouds as a response (הִנֵּעַ) to the voice of Yahweh. The lightning likewise does not drop of its own accord, but reports for duty to its master; each bolt is directed on its way individually by God. The law of nature, according to this cosmology, is that nature does what it is told. . . . The present strophe continues the theme of the rain that has begun at v 25; vv 25–27 have focused especially on downpours of rain, vv 28–30 on the other forms of moisture, vv 31–33 on the influence of the heavenly bodies on the coming of the rains. [David J. A. Clines]

34 “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that an abundance of water will cover you?”

The clouds are not ordered about by men. In 36:29 Elihu asks Job “Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds?” Lift your voice means “shout out orders, call out commands.” [UBS Handbook]

35 “Can you send forth lightnings that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are’?”

Can you send forth lightnings asks if Job can make lightning like God does in 36:32, where he commands the lightning to strike. The form of the verb translated as send forth means “release, unleash,” as in 12:15; 20:23. In 36:32; 37:11–13, the lightnings are God’s servants, and they do as he wishes. . . . The lightnings then say Here we are, which is the plural form of the response formula said by Moses to the Lord in Exodus 3:4, and by Samuel to Eli in 1 Samuel 3:4–6. [UBS Handbook]

Lightning bolts, referred to as God’s arrows, are “sent” (שלח) like messengers (cf. Ps 18:14).

In chap. 36 the author of the book had Elihu answer many of the questions in chap. 38. So the matter of ordering the clouds to release their rain was found in 36:28, and the charge to the lightning, in 36:32; 37:3. [Robert L. Alden]

36 “Who has put wisdom in the innermost being or given understanding to the mind?”

In verse 36, difficult to translate, the word heart could perhaps be rendered “cloud layers” and the word mind, “celestial phenomenon” (see Rowley, Job, pp. 315–6). If those translations are accepted, they fit God’s practice in this chapter of personifying inanimate nature. The clouds and lightning bolts seem to operate as if they have minds of their own. Or if the NIV rendering of verse 36 is correct then the thought is that God gives man wisdom; yet man in all his wisdom cannot tabulate the number of clouds nor can he time the “tilting” of the clouds (like animal skins that hold water) to moisten the dust and the clods. [The Bible Knowledge Commentary]

NIV: 36 Who gives the ibis wisdom or gives the rooster understanding?

Tanakh 36 Who put wisdom in the hidden parts? Who gave understanding to the mind?

Who has put wisdom in the clouds is clear except for the words translated as clouds in line a and mists in line b. The RSV note says the meaning of both words is uncertain. The suggestions put forth by interpreters are numerous and confusing, but there are four major lines of interpretation: (1) psychological terms such as NJV “hidden parts” and “mind,” or NEB “darkness” and “secrecy”; (2) meteorological (weather) terms such as RSV “clouds” and “mist”; (3) mythological terms: Pope has “Thoth,” the Egyptian God, and “Sekwi,” the Coptic name for Mercury; (4) zoological terms (names of creatures) such as Dhorme “ibis” and “cock.” [UBS Handbook]

One crucial and unknown word in each line of v. 36 has occasioned three basic interpretations of the verse.³¹ The NIV agrees with most in rendering them “heart” and “mind.”³² Since the context is about “clouds,” some make guesses in that sphere.³³ The third view is that these are birds known for their wisdom or ability to predict coming storms, the “ibis” and the “rooster” (JB, GNB).³⁴ If correct, the introduction of animals

provides a bridge between the two major parts of this speech, the inanimate (38:4–38) and the animate (38:39–40:20). [Robert L. Alden]

This has been an obscure verse, with many variant translations. Thus KJV had “Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?” RSV, on the other hand, has “Who has put wisdom in the clouds, or given understanding to the mists?” NEB has “Who put wisdom in depths of darkness, and veiled understanding in secrecy?” And JB has “Who gave the ibis wisdom and endowed the cock with foreknowledge?” [David J. A. Clines]

However, there is a good reason why these birds should be mentioned here: they are both associated with the coming of the rains as foretellers of their imminent arrival. The ibis (תוהט) was famous in antiquity for its ability to foretell the rising of the Nile (Dhorme, Gordis). This foretelling was apparently conceived of as a precondition for the rising of the Nile, and to kill an ibis was punishable with death (though whether for that reason is not known); cf. Herodotus, Hist. 2.65.2. . . . The cock . . . was apparently believed to have the ability to forecast the rain (for the same belief in the modern period, cf. J. A. Jaussen, “Le coq et la pluie dans la tradition palestinienne,” RB 33 [1924] 574–82). Othmar Keel has drawn attention to a striking illustration of the language of vv 36–37, a seal cylinder from Nimrud that associates a cock with water jars in heaven (“Zwei kleine Beiträge zum Verständnis der Gottesreden im Buch Ijob [xxxviii 36f., xl 25],” VT 31 [1981] 220–25; also in Dieu répond, 47). [David J. A. Clines]

“Innermost being” = Heb. תּוֹהוֹט in secrecy; in the dark; ibis. “Mind/Heart” = Heb. שֵׁקֶל·וֹי heart; mind; rooster.

VERSES 38:37-38

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

37 “Who can count the clouds by wisdom, or tip the water jars of the heavens, 38 when the dust hardens into a mass and the clods stick together?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, 38 when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

37 Who has the wisdom to number the clouds? Or who can tilt the water jars of heaven 38 when the dust hardens like cast metal and the clods of dirt stick together?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

37 Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens 38 when the dust becomes hard and the clods of earth stick together?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

37 “Who can count the clouds by wisdom, or tip the water jars of the heavens, 38 when the dust hardens into a mass and the clods stick together?”

Who can number the clouds by wisdom asks if anyone has the wisdom to get an accurate count of the vast number of clouds in the sky. This may refer to the fact that their number changes constantly, and so before anyone could reach a total, the counting would have to begin again, and again. Wisdom here has more to do with skill than knowledge, and so FRCL “Who is sufficiently skilled to count the clouds?” [UBS Handbook]

“Water jars of the heavens,” cf. v. 25 “channel for the flood.”

Verse 38, New English Bible: “... when the dusty soil sets hard as iron, and the clods of earth cling together?”

The rain here is the early rain of October–November, falling after the heat of summer has cracked open the ground (cf. the depiction in the Ugaritic Baal myth, “Cracked are the furrows of the field, O Shapash [goddess of the sun], cracked are the furrows of the vast fields” (Baal III.iv.1–2, 12–13 [CML, 113a]). [David J. A. Clines]

VERSES 38:39-40

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

39 “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 when they crouch in their dens and lie in wait in their lair?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

39 “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

39 Can you hunt prey for a lioness or satisfy the appetite of young lions 40 when they crouch in their dens and lie in wait within their lairs?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

39 “Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions 40 when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

The focus now shifts to wild life, and this will continue through chapter 39.

The second half of this first divine speech, in seven strophes, concerns nine animals: the lion (38:39–40), the raven (38:41; together, strophe 1), unless this line also concerns the lion, the mountain goats (strophe 2, 39:1–4), the wild ass (strophe 3, vv 5–8), the wild ox (strophe 4, vv 9–12), the ostrich (strophe 5, vv 13–18), the horse (strophe 6, vv 19–25), the hawk (v 26), and the eagle (vv 27–30, together strophe 7). With the exception of the war horse, these are all wild animals that live their lives totally independently of humans: they are of no service to humans, and humans are comparatively ignorant of their ways. [David J. A. Clines]

The eight sections in this portion of Job flow on the basis of concept bridges. Lion and raven are connected by the concept of food; raven and ibex by their young; ibex and donkey by their free-ranging nature; donkey and ox by their untamable nature; ox and ostrich by their untrustworthiness; ostrich and horse by their relative speeds; horse and hawk by their senses from a distance; and, theoretically, hawk back to lion by their predation. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 403–404]

Note Job’s words in 12:7–10 7 “But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. 8 “Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish

of the sea declare to you. 9 “Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, 10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?

The animals described here are wild (exception being the horse). They wouldn't be found on anyone's farm, much less Job's. These are creatures that are not tame or domesticated. They are not under human control, but God's.

39 “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 when they crouch in their dens and lie in wait in their lair?”

Lions = king of the beasts. Natural to begin with him. Cf. how the lion is portrayed in Scripture as hostile and dangerous to humans (Judg 14:5; Isa 31:4; Jer 2:15; Ezek 19:3). Hebrew shepherd's flocks were not infrequently the victims of attack by lions (1 Sam 17:34–37; Isa 31:4).

Hunt translates the same verb used in 10:16. It means to search for the purpose of killing, not just to find. Lions stalk their victims, as all cats do, by quietly creeping toward them and then springing on them. Obviously Job is not capable of doing this. [UBS Handbook]

Though humans of ancient times especially would rather eradicate the lion than feed it (Duhm, Strahan), God ensures its survival by providing food for it. Here, however, the focus is not on the adult lions but rather on the lion's cubs (so it appears) in vv 39b–40, who are utterly dependent on their parents for their sustenance (the adult lion is more than capable of finding its own food). A lioness will usually have two or three cubs, who are helpless in the first weeks of their life, begin to run around in their second month, but continue to need protection for the first six months. Job 4:11 has alluded to the fate of the cubs if the parent cannot find food. [David J. A. Clines]

Job 4:11 “The lion perishes for lack of prey, And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.

Psalms 104:21 The young lions roar after their prey And seek their food from God.

VERSES 38:41

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

41 “Who prepares for the raven its nourishment when its young cry to God and wander about without food?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

41 Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

41 Who provides the raven’s food when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

41 Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

41 “Who prepares for the raven its nourishment when its young cry to God and wander about without food?”

Unlike the lion, Ravens eat carrion. However: “The connection with the lion in vv 39–40 (if one is to be sought) will probably be not so much that both are carnivorous (so Dhorme, Kissane) but that both, whether huge or small, need to hunt to feed their young.” [Clines]

Wander about translates a verb which can also mean “stagger about.” That is, a creature that is starving staggers when it moves. It is possible to understand this line as referring to their weakness from lack of food. [UBS Handbook]

Jesus said ravens are fed by God, Luke 12:24. On God’s provision of food for animals, cf. Gen 1:30; Pss 104:14, 21, 27; 145:15–16; 147:9; Matt 6:26; Luke 12:24.

A family of ravens includes three to six young. The parents take great care with their young, rarely leaving them alone. This contrasts with the popular ancient belief that ravens hate their young (cf. Tur-Sinai, 537–39; Pliny, Natural History 10.15.31, says they drive their young out of their nests). A patristic interpretation was that God feeds the young of the ravens with dew (Chrysostom, Gregory, Isidore). [David J. A. Clines]

Most commentators ignore the third line that depicts the young wandering about. In most animal families it is the parents who search for food,³⁸ and if parents did not provide, the young would starve. This seems to be God's point. The young ravens are incapable of feeding themselves apart from God's provision of inherited behavioral traits in their parents. [Robert L. Alden]

VERSES 39:1-4

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 “Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer?
2 “Can you count the months they fulfill, or do you know the time they give birth? 3 “They kneel
down, they bring forth their young, they get rid of their labor pains. 4 “Their offspring become
strong, they grow up in the open field; they leave and do not return to them.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the does? 2
Can you number the months that they fulfill, and do you know the time when they give birth, 3
when they crouch, bring forth their offspring, and are delivered of their young? 4 Their young
ones become strong; they grow up in the open; they go out and do not return to them.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Do you know when mountain goats give birth? Have you watched the deer in labor? 2 Can you
count the months they are pregnant so you can know the time they give birth? 3 They crouch
down to give birth to their young; they deliver their newborn. 4 Their offspring are healthy and
grow up in the open field. They leave and do not return.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her
fawn? 2 Do you count the months till they bear? Do you know the time they give birth? 3 They
crouch down and bring forth their young; their labor pains are ended. 4 Their young thrive and
grow strong in the wilds; they leave and do not return.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**1 “Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the
deer?”**

Mountain goats is literally “goats of the rock.” [UBS Handbook] Some transl. have “ibex.”

Do you observe the calving of the hinds? asks if Job spends his time in the isolated
mountains where these wild animals are seldom seen, especially at the time when they
give birth to their young. [UBS Handbook]

Unlike the lion and the raven (38:39–41), the mountain goat or ibex (*Capra ibex nubiana*)
is a shy, elusive creature (Habel). It is a graceful animal, and well suited for life in a harsh
mountain environment; its light tan coloring provides good camouflage. Wild goats are
about 30 inches high at the withers, bucks weighing 130–200 pounds, does 65–110

pounds. The male of the wild goat has long scimitar-shaped horns up to 3 feet long; the female has much shorter horns. In biblical lands there are several varieties of goat, from the large Syrian mountain goats to the dwarf goats of the Arabian peninsula. The Nubian ibex has a gestation period of 5 to 6 months; there are usually one or two young in a birth, and most kids are born in March. They form small herds of eight to ten. For the high mountains as the home of the wild goats, cf. Ps 104:18; and cf. also the place name Wildgoats' Rocks at 1 Sam 24:2 (3) (RSV). The ibex is to be found in modern Israel around Qumran, En-Gedi, and Sinai (Hartley). [David J. A. Clines]

The second colon of v 1 is thought by many to refer to another animal altogether, the deer, which belongs to the woodland fauna, rather than living on exposed mountains. It seems probable, however, that the term אֵלֶּיךָ here does not mean, as everywhere else in the Hebrew Bible, “hind” (female deer)—despite the lexica, the main English versions and many commentators (see Note e)—but “she-goat.” In English too, a “doe” is usually a female deer, but in the context of goats, the term can be used for a she-goat (a “buck” is a he-goat). Its young are “kids.” [David J. A. Clines]

2 “Can you count the months they fulfill, or do you know the time they give birth? 3 “They kneel down, they bring forth their young, they get rid of their labor pains. 4 “Their offspring become strong, they grow up in the open field; they leave and do not return to them.

Job did not even know when certain animals give birth to their young or did he know their gestation periods. Totally apart from man's help or knowledge, but obviously under God's supervision, mountain goats and deer bring forth their young, who soon grow up, leave their parents, and fend for themselves (cf. references to the “young” in 38:41; 39:30). This mountain goat may be the Nubian Ibex, a goat in the wilds of the Middle East that hides when it bears its young. Even now relatively few people have ever seen these goats when they are bearing their offspring. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

The term “count” (סָפַר) does not imply simply “in order to learn the number” but “take account of, consider, reckon” (cf. BDB, 707b; DCH, 6:185b; de Wilde). [Clines]

There is no doubt an implicit contrast with the world of domesticated animals, such as sheep and cattle—a world that Job knows well (strangely, he does not seem to keep goats)—, where the human owners know the details of the animals' gestation, take a close interest in the birthing process, and sometimes need to assist it; the wild animals on the other hand benefit from no human concern—but they do have Yahweh's. [David J. A. Clines]

The providence of God is certainly remarkable (see Ps. 104). In His wisdom and power, God supervises the whole universe and makes sure that His creatures are cared for. “You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Ps. 145:16, NKJV). We humans have a difficult time keeping the machinery of life operating successfully, but

God runs the whole universe with such precision that we build our scientific laws on His creation. [Warren W. Wiersbe]

VERSES 39:5-8

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

5 “Who sent out the wild donkey free? And who loosed the bonds of the swift donkey, 6 to whom I gave the wilderness for a home and the salt land for his dwelling place? 7 “He scorns the tumult of the city, the shoutings of the driver he does not hear. 8 “He explores the mountains for his pasture and searches after every green thing.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

5 “Who has let the wild donkey go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift donkey, 6 to whom I have given the arid plain for his home and the salt land for his dwelling place? 7 He scorns the tumult of the city; he hears not the shouts of the driver. 8 He ranges the mountains as his pasture, and he searches after every green thing.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

5 Who set the wild donkey free? Who released the swift donkey from its harness? 6 I made the wilderness its home, and the salty wasteland its dwelling. 7 It scoffs at the noise of the village and never hears the shouts of a driver. 8 It roams the mountains for its pastureland, searching for anything green.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

5 “Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied its ropes? 6 I gave it the wasteland as its home, the salt flats as its habitat. 7 It laughs at the commotion in the town; it does not hear a driver’s shout. 8 It ranges the hills for its pasture and searches for any green thing.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

5 “Who sent out the wild donkey free? And who loosed the bonds of the swift donkey,

In verses 5–8 the writer thinks of the wild donkey as a domestic donkey that has been granted its freedom, released from its bondage to the city. Translators may consider leaving blank space before verse 5 to show that a new subject is beginning. [UBS Handbook]

The onager [wild donkey] was never domesticated, being temperamentally unsuitable. It feeds on small bushes and hardy grasses. Its color is reddish brown in the summer, lightening to yellowish brown in the winter; the belly is white or buff. The wild ass is said to be faster than all but the swiftest horses; speeds of up to 43 miles per hour have been recorded. It grazes on highland or lowland steppe. [David J. A. Clines]

To roam like a wild ass on the steppe is a familiar idiom (cf. 24:5). References to the wild ass in the Hebrew Bible allude to its quest for food (Job 24:5; Ps 104:11; Jer 14:6), its speed (Jer 48:6), its independence (Hos 8:9), and its avoidance of human society (Gen 16:12; Jer 2:24; Dan 5:21; Ecclus 13:19). . . . It “stands for everything opposed to the world of human order and culture” (Newsom). A saying from the wisdom of the sage Ahiqar enshrines the stubborn independence of the onager: “He said to a wild ass, Let me ride you, and I will feed you. The wild ass replied, Keep your food, and spare me your riding” (ANET, 430b). [Clines]

6 to whom I gave the wilderness for a home and the salt land for his dwelling place?

Though salty soil is comparatively infertile (cf. turning a fruitful land into a salty waste, Ps 107:34, and sowing a city with salt, Judg 9:45), saltings (מֶלַח), i.e., marshes covered by the sea at high tide, are often suitable for grazing and thus are not necessarily “barren land” (KJV). In fact the salt is needed by herbivorous animals to supplement their diet. But such salt lands are uninhabited by humans (cf. Jer 17:6). The Great Rann of Kutch in northwestern India, a saline clay desert of more than 10,000 square miles, remains the prime habitat of the Asiatic wild ass. Inhospitable though such lands may be to humans . . . [David J. A. Clines]

7 “He scorns the tumult of the city, the shoutings of the driver he does not hear. 8 “He explores the mountains for his pasture and searches after every green thing.

Verse 7 “scorns” could be translated “laughs.” The same word is used in “the same sense of “not fear” of the ostrich at v 18, of the war horse at v 22, of Leviathan at 41:21 (29), and of a restored Job at 5:22.” [Clines]

VERSES 39:9-12

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

9 “Will the wild ox consent to serve you, or will he spend the night at your manger? 10 “Can you bind the wild ox in a furrow with ropes, or will he harrow the valleys after you? 11 “Will you trust him because his strength is great and leave your labor to him? 12 “Will you have faith in him that he will return your grain and gather it from your threshing floor?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

9 “Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will he spend the night at your manger? 10 Can you bind him in the furrow with ropes, or will he harrow the valleys after you? 11 Will you depend on him because his strength is great, and will you leave to him your labor? 12 Do you have faith in him that he will return your grain and gather it to your threshing floor?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

9 Would the wild ox be willing to serve you? Would it spend the night by your feeding trough? 10 Can you hold the wild ox to a furrow by its harness? Will it plow the valleys behind you? 11 Can you depend on it because its strength is great? Would you leave it to do your hard work? 12 Can you trust the wild ox to harvest your grain and bring it to your threshing floor?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

9 “Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will it stay by your manger at night? 10 Can you hold it to the furrow with a harness? Will it till the valleys behind you? 11 Will you rely on it for its great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to it? 12 Can you trust it to haul in your grain and bring it to your threshing floor?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

9 “Will the wild ox consent to serve you, or will he spend the night at your manger? 10 “Can you bind the wild ox in a furrow with ropes, or will he harrow the valleys after you?”

The ox and donkey are often mentioned together (e.g., Exod 20:17; 21:33; Isa 1:3).

Unbridled, dangerous, power.

“He was a two-horned creature, some bulls more than six feet across at the shoulders, and a legendary terror. In Psalm 22 David puts being rescued ‘from the horns of the wild oxen’ alongside being saved ‘from the mouth of the lion’ (Psalm 22:21). When Balaam needs to speak forcefully about how God fights with overwhelming power for Israel, he says that God ‘is for them like the horns of the wild ox’ (numbers 23:22; 24:8).”

“There is therefore a wild irony in this description. ‘Why not try this?’ God asks the farmer Job. ‘Go into the wild and find a wild ox. Walk up to it, pat its head, let it eat some food out of your hand, talk to it, be an ‘ox whisperer,’ lead it quietly back to the farm to feed overnight at your feeding trough. Then watch as it bows its meek head to let you put a harness on it and willingly plods with its docile strength ‘after you.’” [Ash, 396-97] This would be absurd and suicidal

Curiously, the KJV as “unicorn” rather than “ox” or “bull.”

. . . now generally identified with the aurochs (*Bos primigenius*), the ancestor of most of our modern cattle, but now extinct (the last specimen is said to have died in 1627). This massive animal was about 10 feet long, and could weigh over a ton, half the size of a rhinoceros; it had two thick, long, curved horns. [David J. A. Clines]

The aurochs was hunted in Egypt, Palestine, and Babylonia. It is usually identified with the rimu mentioned often in the annals of the Assyrian kings. On the Ishtar Gate at Babylon (ANEP, fig. 760), the blue tile decoration is of alternating rows of aurochs and dragons. In Palestine, Baal hunts aurochs in the marshes of Lake Huleh (Baal I.i.19 [CML, 109b]; III.vi.18 [CML, 115a]; Aqhat II.vi.20 [CML, 55a]). In classical literature, see Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.126 (in Macedonia); Aristotle, *Hist. anim.* 1.1 (488a); 2.1 (499a); Pliny, *Natural History* 8.30.72 (in Ethiopia).

In the Hebrew Bible the huge and dangerous horns of the aurochs are especially mentioned (Num 23:22; 24:8; Deut 33:17; Pss 22:21 [22]; 92:10 [11]); cf. also Pss 29:6; 34:7. In Deut 33:17 the horns of a domesticated ox are praised as being like those of an aurochs. Here, since it is a wild beast, not only is the aurochs untameable (vv 9–10), but it is unreliable also (vv 11–12). [Clines]

In contrast with setting wild donkeys free, Job could not tame a wild ox. This animal, perhaps the auroch, resisted domestication. It would not serve Job or stay in his barn overnight, like a domesticated cow. Nor would it submit to plowing. Though unusually strong, it would not do heavy work for man. Nor would it pull a cart with grain from a field to a threshing floor. If Job could not tame even this one wild animal, how could he hope to challenge God’s ways with man? [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Although ox in English refers mainly to a male bovine animal that has been castrated and is used for labor, the animal here was a powerful wild animal with dangerous horns, and in fact it was hunted by the ancient Assyrians. Its characteristics make it appear similar to the African “bush cow” or buffalo. Its strength and fierceness are mentioned in Numbers 23:22; Deuteronomy 33:17; Psalm 92:10. [UBS Handbook]

Verse 10: A wild ox is not fit for the plow.

Keeping the ox in the furrow when plowing is an effort for the farmer; de Wilde reports Palestinian farmers calling out to their beasts, 'uq'od "stay in the furrow!" and 'inzil "go in the furrow!" Can Job imagine tying an aurochs with cords to keep it plowing straight furrows? [David J. A. Clines]

11 "Will you trust him because his strength is great and leave your labor to him? 12 "Will you have faith in him that he will return your grain and gather it from your threshing floor?"

The wild ox is powerful but cannot be trusted, and so God asks Will you depend on him ...? which means "Can you trust him?" "Can you rely on him?" or "Can you count on his great strength?" Will you leave to him your labor may be rendered "will you hand over to him your heavy jobs to do?" Again the clear answer is "No," because a wild ox will not work for a human being. [UBS Handbook]

VERSES 39:13-18

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

13 “The ostriches’ wings flap joyously with the pinion and plumage of love, 14 For she abandons her eggs to the earth and warms them in the dust, 15 And she forgets that a foot may crush them, or that a wild beast may trample them. 16 “She treats her young cruelly, as if they were not hers; though her labor be in vain, she is unconcerned; 17 because God has made her forget wisdom, and has not given her a share of understanding. 18 “When she lifts herself on high, she laughs at the horse and his rider.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

13 “The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, but are they the pinions and plumage of love? 14 For she leaves her eggs to the earth and lets them be warmed on the ground, 15 forgetting that a foot may crush them and that the wild beast may trample them. 16 She deals cruelly with her young, as if they were not hers; though her labor be in vain, yet she has no fear, 17 because God has made her forget wisdom and given her no share in understanding. 18 When she rouses herself to flee, she laughs at the horse and his rider.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

13 The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, but are her feathers and plumage like the stork’s? 14 She abandons her eggs on the ground and lets them be warmed in the sand. 15 She forgets that a foot may crush them or that some wild animal may trample them. 16 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not her own, with no fear that her labor may have been in vain. 17 For God has deprived her of wisdom; He has not endowed her with understanding. 18 When she proudly spreads her wings, she laughs at the horse and its rider.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

13 “The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and feathers of the stork. 14 She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, 15 unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them. 16 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers; she cares not that her labor was in vain, 17 for God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense. 18 Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Verses 13–30 deal with the ostrich, the horse, and the eagle. The section on the ostrich was omitted by the Septuagint, and many interpreters omit verses 13–18. The reason for omitting these verses is the absence of any rhetorical questions, and the fact that in verse 17 God is referred to in the third person. Consequently some scholars have felt these verses to be the work of later copyists. [UBS Handbook]

The theme of this marvelous cameo about the ostrich seems to be its paradoxical nature (similarly Fohrer). A bird that cannot fly is almost a contradiction in terms; it is no elegant stork or high-flying falcon (v 13). And there is a second paradox: although it is reputedly a stupid creature, negligent of its young (vv 14–17), it has no difficulty escaping its predators because of its astonishing speed (v 18). [David J. A. Clines]

The ostrich (*Struthio camelus*) is the largest of birds, the males reaching as high as 8 feet and weighing between 200 and 300 pounds. Ostriches live in flocks of five to 50, normally in the company of grazing animals like antelope and zebra. The ostrich is, after the cheetah, the fastest land animal in the world, capable of running with 11-foot strides (Tristram, *Natural History*, 237, measured strides of up to 28 feet) at speeds over 30 miles per hour for as long as half an hour, with a top speed of 50 miles per hour; it can change direction abruptly at full speed. As it runs, its wings are outspread but it is too heavy to lift itself off the ground. In biblical times it was found in semi-desert regions of Syria, Arabia, and Africa, and, within Palestine, both in desert regions, where it is often depicted in rock art, and on the coastal plain (ostrich eggs from the Chalcolithic period at Gilat; cf. Avraham Negev and Shimon Gibson, *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* [London: Continuum, 1972] 201). The ostrich is in levitical law an unclean bird (Lev 11:16; Deut 14:15). [David J. A. Clines]

“The male ostrich has a strange voice. It gives a deep roar like that of a lion, but with a strange hissing sound” (R. A. Paynter, Jr., “Ostrich,” in *The World Book Encyclopedia* [Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1976], 14:660).

The bird was kept in Egyptian zoos prior to 2000 BC [Alden, fn. 60 on v.

In some ways the fifth little portrait is the odd one out. There are no rhetorical questions . . . God refers to himself in the third person (v. 17a), and the ostrich is the only creature portrayed in a mainly negative light. Perhaps for these reasons the LXX omits it, and may scholars consider it to be an interpolation. But there is no Hebrew manuscript evidence for its omission, and if it is not original, it is hard to see how and why such a strange passage would have been interpolated later. [Ash, 397]

13 “The ostriches’ wings flap joyously with the pinion and plumage of love,

God’s humor: the ostrich.

NIV: 13 “The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and feathers of the stork.

HCSB: 13 The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, but are her feathers and plumage like the stork’s?

In the Hebrew text of verse 13a, there is nothing that is fully certain. The wings of the ostrich wave proudly: ostrich translates a word that can mean “shrill cries.” The word

occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament. However, from the descriptions in the following verses, the ostrich is clearly the subject of these verses. [UBS Handbook]

But are they the pinions and plumage of love? is even more uncertain than the first line, and the vast array of translations results from conjectures and changes too numerous to mention. RSV's footnote says "Heb obscure." In line b the words translated as pinions and plumage are in some sense parallel to the wings in line a. In Ezekiel 17:3 all three of these words are found: "great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage." The word translated as wings in line a is general, while those in line b are more specific. Pinions refers to the wing feathers that spread out to enable a bird to fly. Plumage refers to the outer feathers covering the body and wings. Most interpreters accept the meanings as in RSV

The word translated as love is xasiD, which appears to be the feminine form of the adjective xeseD, which is usually rendered "constant love" and provides the basis for RSV's translation. RSV's rendering draws in part from the following verses, which describe the ostrich as abandoning her eggs in an unkind way. The cruelty of the ostrich was proverbial, judging from Lamentations 4:3. "... but the daughters of my people have become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness." [UBS Handbook]

. . . the meaning "stork" is established by the other five occurrences in the Old Testament.
[Robert L. Alden]

14 For she abandons her eggs to the earth and warms them in the dust, 15 And she forgets that a foot may crush them, or that a wild beast may trample them.

Most birds make nests above ground for their eggs, but the ostrich, being unable to fly up to a tree, lays its eggs in a shallow depression in the soil, making them very vulnerable. In the wild, up to 90% of ostrich nests are destroyed by predators (Brian C. R. Bertram, *The Ostrich Communal Nesting System* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992]). The nest is made by the cock scooping out a hollow in the ground. A hen will typically lay 10 eggs, but the other hens in the same family unit (one cock and 2 to 6 hens) may lay in the same nest, so that a nest may contain as many as 50 eggs; but only 20 or so of them will be incubated. . . . On warm days the major female might leave the nest for periods, especially during the early days of incubation (when she is still laying eggs, one every two days), though she will never go far from it; and she will cover the eggs with sand as protection against the sun. [David J. A. Clines]

Mostly the male does the incubating, sitting on them through the night and some of the day. The females of his harem share the same nest and take turns sitting on it during the day, but still there are times when the eggs are unattended. The verse may also refer to the fact that when danger approaches ostriches flee, hoping to lure predators away from their eggs. [Robert L. Alden]

For she leaves her eggs to the earth: leaves in the sense of “abandon” is argued against by some scholars who understand the verb to mean “lays,” and this implies that the ostrich cares for its eggs. From the content of verses 15–18 it is clear that the poet takes the proverbial view of the careless ostrich. Therefore TEV translates “The ostrich leaves her eggs on the ground.” [UBS Handbook]

16 “She treats her young cruelly, as if they were not hers; though her labor be in vain, she is unconcerned; 17 because God has made her forget wisdom, and has not given her a share of understanding.

She deals cruelly with her young echoes the thought of Lamentations 4:3 cited in the discussion of verse 13. Deals cruelly translates a verb found in Isaiah 63:17, where it is used to describe “hardening of the heart.” “She is cruel,” “she acts harshly,” “she is hard-hearted,” all express the thought in English. [UBS Handbook]

Lamentations 4:3 Even jackals offer the breast, They nurse their young; But the daughter of my people has become cruel Like ostriches in the wilderness.

In folk culture the stupidity of the ostrich is famous (there is an Arab proverb, “more stupid than an ostrich”), but it not certain why. Pliny thought it was because it would thrust its head into a bush and think its whole body was concealed (Natural History 10.1.2), but Diodorus Siculus (2.50.6) thought that was a sign of wisdom, to protect the weakest part of the body. Contrary to the popular belief, ostriches do not hide their heads in the sand, though an incubating female that is disturbed may stretch out its neck and head flat on the ground, merging in color with the dusty gray of the landscape. Others say the ostrich is stupid because it will eat anything offered to it, such as stones or iron (Aelian, On Animals 14.7; Pliny Natural History 1. 10.1; cf. Shakespeare’s “I’ll make thee eat iron like an ostrich” [Henry VI, Part 2 4.10.30]); but in fact these hard objects (stomach stones or gastroliths) are explained by naturalists as an aid to its digestion, facilitating the breaking up of tough, fibrous foods. [David J. A. Clines]

The ostrich was considered stupid because she apparently abandons her eggs and also because when cornered and unable to run away, she lowers her head,⁶² though does not put it into the sand as is widely believed. [Robert L. Alden]

Why did God make a bird that couldn’t fly but that could run faster than a horse? Why did He make a bird that puts her nest in such a vulnerable place where her eggs might be destroyed or eaten by a predator? [Warren W. Wiersbe]

18 “When she lifts herself on high, she laughs at the horse and his rider.

Positive note: the ostrich can run faster than the horse and his rider. “Laughs” cf. v. 7.

The ostrich, a bizarre bird, is odd-featured, weighing up to 300 pounds and reaching a height of seven or eight feet. It flaps its wings but it cannot fly. Unlike birds that fly, such as the stork, an ostrich lays its eggs in a nest on the ground. In fact several ostrich hens lay their eggs in one nest, but if there is no more room in the nest they deposit their eggs outside the nest in the sand. There other brooding hens, in the confusion of getting in and out of the nest, often crush these eggs. Ostriches' seeming unconcern for or even cruel treatment of their young (v. 16; cf. Lam. 4:3) evidences their lack of wisdom and good sense. Hens may desert the nest if they are overfed, or if impatient they may leave the nest before all the chicks are hatched. If a human disturbs a nest, an ostrich may trample the eggs. Or a hen may sit on eggs in another nest, forgetting her own. (For these and other examples of ostrich stupidity see George F. Howe, "Job and the Ostrich: A Case Study in Biblical Accuracy," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 15. December 1963:107–10.) Yet in spite of its stupidity, an ostrich can run 40 miles an hour, faster than a horse. Would Job even think of making such a peculiar bird? [BKC]

Note ostrich festival in Chandler, AZ. And a good kick to the chest from an ostrich will kill a man.

Here is a creature with "wings," but it cannot fly (v. 13a), a creature with the reputation of leaving her new-laid eggs vulnerable and defenseless on the warm ground (v. 14), not caring about the danger of their being trampled upon (v. 15)—perhaps by a "wild beast" (v. 15) like the lion, the mountain goat, the wild donkey, or the wild ox in the previous cameos. Although she has gone through pregnancy, labor, and the laying of the "eggs" (v.14), she doesn't seem to care if "her labor be in vain" (v. 16). Indeed' she is a very stupid creature (v. 17)! And the reason she is so stupid is that God, in his sovereign counsel, "has made her forget wisdom" (that is, he has not endowed her with wisdom) and has chosen not to give her the expected share of common sense! Here is a creature whom God has created stupid! And yet-and here is the surprising punch line - although she flaps her wings without being able to fly, she can run so fast that even a horse spurred on by a rider cannot catch her (v. 18)! . . . to "laugh" at the horse and rider is to claim superiority (v. 18). God has made a creature with an amazing burst of speed and a comical lack of common sense. [Ash, 398]

VERSES 39:19-25

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

19 “Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane? 20 “Do you make him leap like the locust? His majestic snorting is terrible. 21 “He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He goes out to meet the weapons. 22 “He laughs at fear and is not dismayed; And he does not turn back from the sword. 23 “The quiver rattles against him, The flashing spear and javelin. 24 “With shaking and rage he races over the ground, And he does not stand still at the voice of the trumpet. 25 “As often as the trumpet sounds he says, ‘Aha!’ And he scents the battle from afar, And the thunder of the captains and the war cry.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

19 “Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane? 20 Do you make him leap like the locust? His majestic snorting is terrifying. 21 He paws in the valley and exults in his strength; he goes out to meet the weapons. 22 He laughs at fear and is not dismayed; he does not turn back from the sword. 23 Upon him rattle the quiver, the flashing spear, and the javelin. 24 With fierceness and rage he swallows the ground; he cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet. 25 When the trumpet sounds, he says ‘Aha!’ He smells the battle from afar, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

19 Do you give strength to the horse? Do you adorn his neck with a mane? 20 Do you make him leap like a locust? His proud snorting fills one with terror. 21 He paws in the valley and rejoices in his strength; He charges into battle. 22 He laughs at fear, since he is afraid of nothing; he does not run from the sword. 23 A quiver rattles at his side, along with a flashing spear and a lance. 24 He charges ahead with trembling rage; he cannot stand still at the trumpet’s sound. 25 When the trumpet blasts, he snorts defiantly. He smells the battle from a distance; he hears the officers’ shouts and the battle cry.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

19 “Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane? 20 Do you make it leap like a locust, striking terror with its proud snorting? 21 It paws fiercely, rejoicing in its strength, and charges into the fray. 22 It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; it does not shy away from the sword. 23 The quiver rattles against its side, along with the flashing spear and lance. 24 In frenzied excitement it eats up the ground; it cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. 25 At the blast of the trumpet it snorts, ‘Aha!’ It catches the scent of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

A dark and terrible picture: the warhorse. “It is an eerie and haunting picture” [cited by Ash, 399]

19 “Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane?”

Do you give the horse his might? Might translates a word usually meaning physical as well as moral strength. It is used in 12:13, “with God are wisdom and might.” See also 26:14. [UBS Handbook]

This is a war-horse (v. 21-25), pulling a chariot or mounted. Pulling a chariot, it was the Abrams Tank of its day.

This vignette of the horse has been called by many the most brilliant of all the animal depictions in these chapters. Longer than all the other animal descriptions, as if the poet could not restrain himself, the strophe is remarkably vivid. Andersen suggests that “the nervous energy of this mettlesome steed can be felt more effectively when the poetry is arranged in short staccato lines,” each colon as a line in its own right. The horse is nowhere in the Hebrew Bible so much the object of appreciation as here; prophets and wisdom teachers are more prone to warn of the folly of amassing stables of horses and of trusting in the prowess of horses (Isa 30:15–16; 31:1, 3; Prov 21:31; Ps 33:17; cf. 147:10). Israel’s memory includes some bad experiences with horses, such as the pursuit by the pharaoh’s chariots (Exod 14:9, 23; 15:19, 21), and defeats at the hands of foreign armies with their chariots (cf., e.g., Judg 1:19; 2 Kgs 13:7). [David J. A. Clines]

Some think that the presence of the horse here is odd, in that the horse is not a wild animal (cf. Andersen, Newsom, Whybray), but one used by humans and evidently trained for a human purpose. But unless we argue that the strophe was not an original part of the poem (as, e.g., Strauss), we should accept that what the animals here (and in chaps. 40–41) have in common is not precisely that they are wild but that they are not tamed or domesticated, like the ox or ass or like sheep or goats; the war horse may be trained, but it is not domesticated (Aristotle already discussed the classification of animals as wild and tame, pointing out how the categories overlap [Hist. anim. 1.1 (488a)]). [David J. A. Clines]

Domestication of horses predates the second millennium B.C., so this reference does not preclude dating the book early. Genesis 47:17 is the earliest biblical reference to horses, in connection with Joseph’s administration of Egypt’s resources. Throughout the biblical period, horses were mainly the possessions of royalty and served in their armies. They were not used for farming and not listed among Job’s holdings. [Robert L. Alden]

On the strength of the horse, cf. my only experience riding one when I was around 30.

The horse’s mane is the symbol of its strength, just as Samson’s hair was of his strength (Judg 16:17).

20 “Do you make him leap like the locust? His majestic snorting is terrible.

His majestic snorting is terrible: majestic translates a word meaning “glorious or proud,” which characterizes the noise made through the horse’s nostrils as he blows air. The sound the horse makes is awesome or terrifying. [UBS Handbook]

21 “He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; he goes out to meet the weapons. 22 “He laughs at fear and is not dismayed; and he does not turn back from the sword. 23 “The quiver rattles against him, the flashing spear and javelin.

He laughs at fear depicts the war horse scorning the thought of fear just as the fast moving ostrich laughs at the horse and rider in verse 18, and the donkey at the noise of the city in verse 7. [UBS Handbook]

24 “With shaking and rage he races over the ground, and he does not stand still at the voice of the trumpet. 25 “As often as the trumpet sounds he says, ‘Aha!’ and he scents the battle from afar, and the thunder of the captains and the war cry.

Horses have an excellent sense of smell.

See the picture painted by Ash, p. 399.

Perhaps the Sabeans and Chaldeans rode upon such horses . . .

VERSES 39:26

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

26 “Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars, stretching his wings toward the south?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

26 “Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars and spreads his wings toward the south?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

26 Does the hawk take flight by your understanding and spread its wings to the south?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

26 “Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

26 **“Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars, stretching his wings toward the south?”**

Birds of Prey (26-27).

At least 18 species of hawks are reported to exist in Palestine. Spreads his wings toward the south depicts the hawk migrating to the south.

VERSES 39:27-30

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

27 “Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high? 28 “On the cliff he dwells and lodges, upon the rocky crag, an inaccessible place. 29 “From there he spies out food; his eyes see it from afar. 30 “His young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is he.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

27 Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high? 28 On the rock he dwells and makes his home, on the rocky crag and stronghold. 29 From there he spies out the prey; his eyes behold it from far away. 30 His young ones suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is he.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

27 Does the eagle soar at your command and make its nest on high? 28 It lives on a cliff where it spends the night; its stronghold is on a rocky crag. 29 From there it searches for prey; its eyes penetrate the distance. 30 Its brood gulps down blood, and where the slain are, it is there.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

27 Does the eagle soar at your command and build its nest on high? 28 It dwells on a cliff and stays there at night; a rocky crag is its stronghold. 29 From there it looks for food; its eyes detect it from afar. 30 Its young ones feast on blood, and where the slain are, there it is.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

27 “Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high?”

The Septuagint translated “vulture,” and this is followed by FRCL, BJ, and NEB. Pope says the word neshar designates both eagles and vultures, including the golden eagle and the carrion vulture. For descriptions of these birds see *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, pages 82–85. In modern times eight species of eagles and four of vultures are found in Palestine. Although most modern translations have eagle, the context of verses 28–30 describes the vulture better than the eagle. [UBS Handbook]

That a vulture may be in mind is supported by the loose connection with Matt. 24:28 and Luke 17:37:

And where the slain are, there is he is loosely quoted in Matthew 24:28 and Luke 17:37 as a proverbial saying. This saying may have already been in circulation before Job was written. [UBS Handbook]

Matthew 24:28 “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

Luke 17:37 And answering they said to Him, “Where, Lord?” And He said to them, “Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.”

Associated with the hawk is another bird of prey, the eagle or vulture (the one Hebrew term, *נֶשֶׁר*, does duty for both species; there is an unfortunate tendency, since the time of the Greeks, to use “eagle” when the reference is positive and “vulture” when it is negative, as Keel, *Entgegnung*, 69 n. 234, notes). [David J. A. Clines]

The species of eagle or vulture referred to here has been identified by G. R. Driver as the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus fulvus*) (see Note a for details). It feeds on the carcasses of large animals, mostly on what has been left by wolves and bears. [David J. A. Clines]

Eagles build their nests high on the cliffs; but God gave them keen eyesight so they can see their prey from afar, swoop down, and capture it. [Warren W. Wiersbe]

28 “On the cliff he dwells and lodges, upon the rocky crag, an inaccessible place. 29 “From there he spies out food; his eyes see it from afar. 30 “His young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is he.”

Devouring carcasses and sucking blood may suggest that this bird is the griffon-vulture rather than the eagle (George Cansdale, *Animals of Bible Lands*. London: Paternoster Press, 1970, p. 144). The Hebrew *nešer* may include both eagles and vultures (cf. 9:26). [BKC]

This view of a few of the world’s fauna demonstrates that Job, unable to contend with creation, hardly qualified to condemn the Creator. At the same time these words point up God’s delight in His creation. His stars and angels sang and shouted when He made the earth (38:7), and He apparently enjoys His animal world. [BKC]

Other biblical references to the nest of the eagle or vulture in inaccessible places are Jer 49:16, where Yahweh threatens the Edomite enemy that “Though you make your nest as high as the eagles, I will bring you down from there,” and Obad 4, where Yahweh says to the same enemy, “Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, thence I will bring you down.” Cf. also Num 24:21, where it is said of the Kenites, living in much the same region as the Edomites, that their “nest is set in the rock.” [David J. A. Clines]

The griffon vulture (if that is what we have here) is completely reliant on its excellent sight. The eagle is the most sharp sighted of birds.

Yahweh has filled his created world with a vast variety of life forms, each with its own qualities and peculiarities, in which he evidently takes a delight. [Clines]

The Lord's defense of his "counsel" (38:2) is not like so many Christian celebrations of the wonders of creation, in which our calendar photos are carefully chosen to be beautiful, full of grace and majesty, showing no violence or death. Rather, the Lord gives Job a brutal, in-your-face portrait of death and danger, as well as of birth and life. There is in the universe a great deal of death, violence, predation (both among animals and, metaphorically, humans), danger, and terror. He says, "You know that, Job. You know that all this is inextricably entwined in the world you know; you cannot take out the death and leave just life alone, for there would be no life without death." Any plan, any government of this world in which good is ultimately to triumph, must necessarily have within it a plan to overcome evil with good. Job could not expect, we cannot expect, a shallow, trite, banal, simple solution to the problem of evil. We must not be surprised if the counsel of God is inscrutable; we must not challenge his counsel with the arrogance of human claims to superhuman knowledge. [Ash, 401]

Note that God both enjoys his creation and provides for it.

VERSES 40:1-2

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then the LORD said to Job, 2 “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 And the LORD said to Job: 2 “Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 The LORD answered Job: 2 Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? Let him who argues with God give an answer.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 The LORD said to Job: 2 “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then the LORD said to Job, 2 “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.”

Wording is the same as in 38:1, except the phrase “out of the storm” is lacking.

Note YHWH (v. 1) and Shaddai (v. 2).

Faultfinder translates a word found only here, but it is based on a root meaning “to correct or reprove.” [UBS Handbook]

Faultfinders in general are bad.

God’s first speech, which began with a rebuke and a challenge (cf. 38:2–3), also concluded with a rebuke and a challenge. The rebuke is in the form of a question. [BKC]

The one who contends refers to Job. Twice (10:2; 23:6) Job considered God’s (10:1) contending with him (*rîb*, bringing a court case against him), but now ironically, God turned the accusation around. (Cf. Elihu’s words, “Why do you complain [*rîb*] to Him?” [33:13]) How could Job now dare indict God? Since Job had accused God he should answer these questions (cf. “answer Me” in 38:3; 40:7). [BKC]

As in a court dispute, either Job will have to admit the truth of his opponent's reply or else he will have to offer some new arguments.

Three words characterize the criticism: Job is one who “contends” (ryb), seeks to “correct” (ysr), and “accuses” (ykh). The first verb is a legal term referring to a court dispute and is used both by Job in his inquiries about why God is contending with him (e.g., 10:2), and by Elihu describing Job's response to God (33:13). [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 404]

Here is a man who lost his wealth, his reputation, his children, and his health. And God says, in summary, “I know what I am doing; in the cosmos as well as in your life.”