

God Questions Job About Creation (c. 2200 BC)

Job 38:1–38

Yahweh’s Introductory Challenge—“I will question you...”

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:

- 2 “Who is this who darkens counsel
with words without knowledge?
3 Get ready for a difficult task like a man;
I will question you
and you will inform me!

Creation of the Earth

- 4 “Where were you
when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you possess understanding!
5 Who set its measurements—if you know—
or who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 On what were its bases set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
7 when the morning stars sang in chorus,
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The Sea

- 8 “Who shut up the sea with doors
when it burst forth, coming out of the womb,
9 when I made the storm clouds its garment,
and thick darkness its swaddling band,
10 when I prescribed its limits,
and set in place its bolts and doors,
11 when I said, ‘To here you may come
and no farther,
here your proud waves will be confined’?

The Rotation of the Earth

- 12 Have you ever in your life commanded the morning,
or made the dawn know its place,
13 that it might seize the corners of the earth,
and shake the wicked out of it?
14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal;
its features are dyed like a garment.
15 Then from the wicked the light is withheld,
and the arm raised in violence is broken.

The Underworld

- 16 Have you gone to the springs that fill the sea,
or walked about in the recesses of the deep?
17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you?
Have you seen the gates of deepest darkness?
18 Have you considered the vast expanses of the earth?
Tell me, if you know it all!

Light and Darkness

- 19 “In what direction does light reside,
and darkness, where is its place,
20 that you may take them to their borders
and perceive the pathways to their homes?
21 You know, for you were born before them;
and the number of your days is great!

The Weather

- 22 Have you entered the storehouse of the snow,
or seen the armory of the hail,
23 which I reserve for the time of trouble,
for the day of war and battle?
24 In what direction is lightning dispersed,
or the east winds scattered over the earth?
25 Who carves out a channel for the heavy rains,
and a path for the rumble of thunder,
26 to cause it to rain on an uninhabited land,
a desert where there are no human beings,
27 to satisfy a devastated and desolate land,
and to cause it to sprout with vegetation?
28 Does the rain have a father,
or who has fathered the drops of the dew?
29 From whose womb does the ice emerge,
and the frost from the sky, who gives birth to it,
30 when the waters become hard like stone,
when the surface of the deep is frozen solid?

The Stars

- 31 Can you tie the bands of the Pleiades,
or release the cords of Orion?
32 Can you lead out
the constellations in their seasons,
or guide the Bear with its cubs?
33 Do you know the laws of the heavens,
or can you set up their rule over the earth?

The Clouds

- 34 Can you raise your voice to the clouds
so that a flood of water covers you?
35 Can you send out lightning bolts, and they go?
Will they say to you, 'Here we are'?
36 Who has put wisdom in the heart,
or has imparted understanding to the mind?
37 Who by wisdom can count the clouds,
and who can tip over the water jars of heaven,
38 when the dust hardens into a mass,
and the clumps of earth stick together?

God Questions Job About the Animals (c. 2200 BC)

Job 38:39–39:30

Lions and Ravens

- 38:39 "Do you hunt prey for the lioness,
and satisfy the appetite of the lions,
40 when they crouch in their dens,
when they wait in ambush in the thicket?
41 Who prepares prey for the raven,
when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?

Mountain Goats

- 39:1 "Are you acquainted with the way
the mountain goats give birth?
Do you watch as the wild deer give birth to their young?
2 Do you count the months they must fulfill,
and do you know the time they give birth?

- 3 They crouch, they bear their young,
they bring forth the offspring they have carried.
- 4 Their young grow strong, and grow up in the open;
they go off, and do not return to them.

Wild Donkeys

- 5 Who let the wild donkey go free?
Who released the bonds of the donkey,
6 to whom I appointed the steppe for its home,
the salt wastes as its dwelling place?
- 7 It scorns the tumult in the town;
it does not hear the shouts of a driver.
- 8 It ranges the hills as its pasture,
and searches after every green plant.

Wild Oxen

- 9 Is the wild ox willing to be your servant?
Will it spend the night at your feeding trough?
- 10 Can you bind the wild ox to a furrow with its rope,
will it till the valleys, following after you?
- 11 Will you rely on it because its strength is great?
Will you commit your labor to it?
- 12 Can you count on it to bring in your grain,
and gather the grain to your threshing floor?

Ostriches

- 13 “The wings of the ostrich flap with joy,
but are they the pinions and plumage of a stork?
- 14 For she leaves her eggs on the ground,
and lets them be warmed on the soil.
- 15 She forgets that a foot might crush them,
or that a wild animal might trample them.
- 16 She is harsh with her young,
as if they were not hers;
she is unconcerned
about the uselessness of her labor.
- 17 For God deprived her of wisdom,
and did not impart understanding to her.
- 18 But as soon as she springs up,
she laughs at the horse and its rider.

Horses

- 19 “Do you give the horse its strength?
Do you clothe its neck with a mane?
- 20 Do you make it leap like a locust?
Its proud neighing is terrifying!
- 21 It paws the ground in the valley,
exulting mightily,
it goes out to meet the weapons.
- 22 It laughs at fear and is not dismayed;
it does not shy away from the sword.
- 23 On it the quiver rattles;
the lance and javelin flash.
- 24 In excitement and impatience it consumes the ground;
it cannot stand still when the trumpet is blown.
- 25 At the sound of the trumpet, it says, ‘Aha!’
And from a distance it catches the scent of battle,
the thunderous shouting of commanders,

and the battle cries.

Hawks

- 26 “Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars,
and spreads its wings toward the south?
27 Is it at your command that the eagle soars,
and builds its nest on high?
28 It lives on a rock and spends the night there,
on a rocky crag and a fortress.
29 From there it spots its prey,
its eyes gaze intently from a distance.
30 And its young ones devour the blood,
and where the dead carcasses are,
there it is.”

God Questions Job About the Behemoth and the Leviathan (c. 2200 BC)

Job 40–41

Concluding Challenge

40:1 Then the LORD answered Job:

- 2 “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?
Let the person who accuses God give him an answer!”

Job Recognizes His Lack of Knowledge and Power, and Does Not Presume to Answer God

3 Then Job answered the LORD:

- 4 “Indeed, I am completely unworthy—how could I reply to you?
I put my hand over my mouth to silence myself.
5 I have spoken once, but I cannot answer;
twice, but I will say no more.”

Yahweh Continues to Question Job

6 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

- 7 “Get ready for a difficult task like a man.
I will question you and you will inform me!

God’s Justice

- 8 Would you indeed annul my justice?
Would you declare me guilty so that you might be right?
9 Do you have an arm as powerful as God’s,
and can you thunder with a voice like his?
10 Adorn yourself, then, with majesty and excellency,
and clothe yourself with glory and honor!
11 Scatter abroad the abundance of your anger.
Look at every proud man and bring him low;
12 Look at every proud man and abase him;
crush the wicked on the spot!
13 Hide them in the dust together,
imprison them in the grave.
14 Then I myself will acknowledge to you
that your own right hand can save you.

The “Behemoth”

- 15 “Look now at Behemoth, which I made as I made you;
it eats grass like the ox.
16 Look at its strength in its loins,

- and its power in the muscles of its belly.
- 17 It makes its tail stiff like a cedar,
the sinews of its thighs are tightly wound.
- 18 Its bones are tubes of bronze,
its limbs like bars of iron.
- 19 It ranks first among the works of God,
the One who made it
has furnished it with a sword.
- 20 For the hills bring it food,
where all the wild animals play.
- 21 Under the lotus trees it lies,
in the secrecy of the reeds and the marsh.
- 22 The lotus trees conceal it in their shadow;
the poplars by the stream conceal it.
- 23 If the river rages, it is not disturbed,
it is secure, though the Jordan
should surge up to its mouth.
- 24 Can anyone catch it by its eyes,
or pierce its nose with a snare?

The “Leviathan”

- 41:1 “Can you pull in Leviathan with a hook,
and tie down its tongue with a rope?
2 Can you put a cord through its nose,
or pierce its jaw with a hook?
3 Will it make numerous supplications to you,
will it speak to you with tender words?
4 Will it make a pact with you,
so you could take it as your slave for life?
5 Can you play with it, like a bird,
or tie it on a leash for your girls?
6 Will partners bargain for it?
Will they divide it up among the merchants?
7 Can you fill its hide with harpoons
or its head with fishing spears?
8 If you lay your hand on it,
you will remember the fight,
and you will never do it again!
9 See, his expectation is wrong,
he is laid low even at the sight of it.
10 Is it not fierce when it is awakened?
Who is he, then, who can stand before it?
11 (Who has confronted me that I should repay?
Everything under heaven belongs to me!)
12 I will not keep silent about its limbs,
and the extent of its might,
and the grace of its arrangement.
13 Who can uncover its outer covering?
Who can penetrate to the inside of its armor?
14 Who can open the doors of its mouth?
Its teeth all around are fearsome.
15 Its back has rows of shields,
shut up closely together as with a seal;
16 each one is so close to the next
that no air can come between them.
17 They lock tightly together, one to the next;
they cling together and cannot be separated.
18 Its snorting throws out flashes of light;

- its eyes are like the red glow of dawn.
- 19 Out of its mouth go flames,
sparks of fire shoot forth!
- 20 Smoke streams from its nostrils
as from a boiling pot over burning rushes.
- 21 Its breath sets coals ablaze
and a flame shoots from its mouth.
- 22 Strength lodges in its neck,
and despair runs before it.
- 23 The folds of its flesh are tightly joined;
they are firm on it, immovable.
- 24 Its heart is hard as rock,
hard as a lower millstone.
- 25 When it rises up, the mighty are terrified,
at its thrashing about they withdraw.
- 26 Whoever strikes it with a sword
will have no effect,
nor with the spear, arrow, or dart.
- 27 It regards iron as straw
and bronze as rotten wood.
- 28 Arrows do not make it flee;
slingstones become like chaff to it.
- 29 A club is counted as a piece of straw;
it laughs at the rattling of the lance.
- 30 Its underparts are the sharp points of potsherds,
it leaves its mark in the mud
like a threshing sledge.
- 31 It makes the deep boil like a cauldron
and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment,
- 32 It leaves a glistening wake behind it;
one would think the deep had a head of white hair.
- 33 The likes of it is not on earth,
a creature without fear.
- 34 It looks on every haughty being;
it is king over all that are proud.”

God Restores the Fortunes of Job (c. 2200 BC)

Job 42

Job Humbles Himself Before Yahweh

1 Then Job answered the LORD:

- 2 “I know that you can do all things;
no purpose of yours can be thwarted;
- 3 you asked,
‘Who is this who darkens counsel
without knowledge?’
But I have declared without understanding
things too wonderful for me to know.
- 4 You said,
‘Pay attention, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you will answer me.’
- 5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye has seen you.
- 6 Therefore I despise myself,
and I repent in dust and ashes!”

God Is Angry With Job's Friends

7 After the LORD had spoken these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My anger is stirred up against you and your two friends, because you have not spoken about me what is right, as my servant Job has.

8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job will intercede for you, and I will respect him, so that I do not deal with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken about me what is right, as my servant Job has."

9 So they went, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, and did just as the LORD had told them; and the LORD had respect for Job.

God Restores the Fortunes of Job

10 So the LORD restored what Job had lost after he prayed for his friends, and the LORD doubled all that had belonged to Job.

11 So they came to him, all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they dined with him in his house. They comforted him and consoled him for all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.

12 So the LORD blessed the second part of Job's life more than the first. He had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys.

13 And he also had seven sons and three daughters.

14 The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-Happuch.

15 Nowhere in all the land could women be found who were as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance alongside their brothers.

16 After this Job lived 140 years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation.

17 And so Job died, old and full of days.

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