

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 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!

Creation of the Earth

- 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?

The Sea

- 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'?

The Rotation of the Earth

- 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.

The Underworld

- 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.

Light and Darkness

- 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!

The Weather

- 22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow,

- 23 Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
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.

The Stars

- 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?

The Clouds

- 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?

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

Job 38:39–39:30

Lions and Ravens

- 38:39 “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?

Mountain Goats

- 39:1 “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.

Wild Donkeys

- 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.

Wild Oxen

- 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?

Ostriches

- 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.

Horses

- 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.

Hawks

- 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.”

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

Job 40–41

Concluding Challenge

40:1 Then the LORD said to Job,

- 2 “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty?
Let him who reproves God answer it.”

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

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.”

Yahweh Continues to Question Job

6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm and said,

- 7 “Now gird up your loins like a man;
I will ask you, and you instruct Me.

God’s Justice

- 8 “Will you really annul My judgment?
Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?
- 9 “Or do you have an arm like God,
And can you thunder with a voice like His?
- 10 “Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity,
And clothe yourself with honor and majesty.
- 11 “Pour out the overflowings of your anger,
And look on everyone who is proud, and make him low.
- 12 “Look on everyone who is proud, *and* humble him,
And tread down the wicked where they stand.
- 13 “Hide them in the dust together;
Bind them in the hidden *place*.
- 14 “Then I will also confess to you,
That your own right hand can save you.

The “Behemoth”

- 15 “Behold now, Behemoth, which I made as well as you;
He eats grass like an ox.
- 16 “Behold now, his strength in his loins
And his power in the muscles of his belly.
- 17 “He bends his tail like a cedar;
The sinews of his thighs are knit together.
- 18 “His bones are tubes of bronze;
His limbs are like bars of iron.
- 19 “He is the first of the ways of God;
Let his maker bring near his sword.
- 20 “Surely the mountains bring him food,

- And all the beasts of the field play there.
21 “Under the lotus plants he lies down,
In the covert of the reeds and the marsh.
22 “The lotus plants cover him with shade;
The willows of the brook surround him.
23 “If a river rages, he is not alarmed;
He is confident, though the Jordan rushes to his mouth.
24 “Can anyone capture him when he is on watch,
With barbs can anyone pierce *his* nose?

The “Leviathan”

- 41:1 “Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?
Or press down his tongue with a cord?
2 “Can you put a rope in his nose
Or pierce his jaw with a hook?
3 “Will he make many supplications to you,
Or will he speak to you soft words?
4 “Will he make a covenant with you?
Will you take him for a servant forever?
5 “Will you play with him as with a bird,
Or will you bind him for your maidens?
6 “Will the traders bargain over him?
Will they divide him among the merchants?
7 “Can you fill his skin with harpoons,
Or his head with fishing spears?
8 “Lay your hand on him;
Remember the battle; you will not do it again!
9 “Behold, your expectation is false;
Will you be laid low even at the sight of him?
10 “No one is so fierce that he dares to arouse him;
Who then is he that can stand before Me?
11 “Who has given to Me that I should repay *him*?
Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.
12 “I will not keep silence concerning his limbs,
Or his mighty strength, or his orderly frame.
13 “Who can strip off his outer armor?
Who can come within his double mail?
14 “Who can open the doors of his face?
Around his teeth there is terror.
15 “*His* strong scales are *his* pride,
Shut up *as with* a tight seal.
16 “One is so near to another
That no air can come between them.
17 “They are joined one to another;
They clasp each other and cannot be separated.
18 “His sneezes flash forth light,
And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.
19 “Out of his mouth go burning torches;
Sparks of fire leap forth.
20 “Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth
As *from* a boiling pot and *burning* rushes.
21 “His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes forth from his mouth.
22 “In his neck lodges strength,
And dismay leaps before him.
23 “The folds of his flesh are joined together,
Firm on him and immovable.
24 “His heart is as hard as a stone,

- Even as hard as a lower millstone.
- 25 “When he raises himself up, the mighty fear;
Because of the crashing they are bewildered.
- 26 “The sword that reaches him cannot avail,
Nor the spear, the dart or the javelin.
- 27 “He regards iron as straw,
Bronze as rotten wood.
- 28 “The arrow cannot make him flee;
Slingstones are turned into stubble for him.
- 29 “Clubs are regarded as stubble;
He laughs at the rattling of the javelin.
- 30 “His underparts are *like* sharp potsherds;
He spreads out *like* a threshing sledge on the mire.
- 31 “He makes the depths boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a jar of ointment.
- 32 “Behind him he makes a wake to shine;
One would think the deep to be gray-haired.
- 33 “Nothing on earth is like him,
One made without fear.
- 34 “He looks on everything that is high;
He is king over all the sons of pride.”

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

Job 42

Job Humbles Himself Before Yahweh

- 1 Then Job answered the LORD and said,
- 2 “I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
- 3 ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”
- 4 ‘Hear, now, and I will speak;
I will ask You, and You instruct me.’
- 5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You;
- 6 Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes.”

God Is Angry With Job’s Friends

- 7 It came about after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.
- 8 Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you *according to your folly*, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.”
- 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job.

God Restores the Fortunes of Job

- 10 The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.
- 11 Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold.
- 12 The LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys.
- 13 He had seven sons and three daughters.
- 14 He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch.

15 In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers.
16 After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations.
17 And Job died, an old man and full of days.

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