

Session 18

*God Demands Job Answer Him
Concerning Creation*

Job 37:23–38:36

Scriptures

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Job 37:23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

Though sinners through their own efforts cannot find out God, He can find out them.

In the context of the approaching storm, Elihu asserts that if nature itself is not fully understood, how could God and His ways with man be so easy and simple to then understand?

Job 37:24 Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

Concluding his spiritual correction, Elihu finishes his discourse with Job with this strikingly simple, but yet profound spiritual truth, that God *respecteth not any that are wise of heart*.

It is this lesson that is the ultimate lesson which the book of Job, seeks to impart—that *he [God] respecteth not any that are wise of heart*. This was Job's sin, as well as his friends' sin, and neither had been hidden from God's sight.

Like John the Baptist, Elihu has now prepared the way for One greater than himself to speak and begin revealing even greater heavenly revelation.

The Lord's messenger has done his part, and now Jehovah will do His.

Elihu, like John, was a forerunner to One greater than himself. Like John, his ministry was purposed to prepare sinners for the Lord's own divine arrival.

This is the purpose of all true ministries sent by the Lord, and Elihu's ministry is one of the very first biblical examples of this.

Mark 1:3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

This is in reference to Isaiah 40:3.

Benson Commentary, Isa. 40:3

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.) The idea is taken from the practice of the eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition, or took a journey, especially through desert and unpractised countries, sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

(NIV) *Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:*

This magnificent display of God's power was intimidating, and His manifestation would be worthy of nothing less.

Psalms 29:3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.

The Lord's creation both revealed and hid His presence, and Job could not doubt the seriousness that the change in climate was impressing upon him.

The atmosphere reflected the severity of Job's crime, for God spoke not in a still small voice, but out of a strong, powerful, and threatening whirlwind.

Nature showed its agreement with the Lord, and He has directed it to ready Job's heart for upcoming spiritual correction.

Benson Commentary, Job 38:1

Then the Lord answered Job—No sooner had Elihu uttered the words last mentioned, but there was a sensible token of the presence of that dreadful majesty of God among them, spoken of Job 38:22, and Jehovah began to debate the matter with Job, as he had desired; *out of the whirlwind*—Out of a dark and thick cloud, from which he sent a terrible and tempestuous wind, as the harbinger of his presence.

Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

This is what Job had done; he had darkened God's counsel by words without any true knowledge of God. This the Lord reveals is his sin, and he now must give account for it.

Benson Commentary, Job 38:2

Who is this, &c.—What and where is he that presumes to talk at this rate? *That darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*—Words proceeding from ignorance, mistake, and want of consideration. Who is this that disparages my counsels, and darkens the wisdom of my dispensations with his ignorant discourses about them? This language becomes not a creature, much less a professor of the true religion. The person here intended is not Elihu, who spoke last, but Job, who had spoken most, as is manifest from the former verse, in which it is said, *The Lord answered Job*; and from Job 42:3, where Job takes the following reproof to himself, as also from the following discourse, wherein God convinces Job by divers of the same kind of arguments which Elihu had used against him. With a single question God shows the absolute emptiness of human abilities, strikes Job to the heart, and puts an end to the dispute.

When men speak, they either reveal the Lord's true nature and character to others, or they distort His image. If not led by the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to speak of God without darkening Whom He really is.

Hence, whenever human reason, tradition, or experience replaces divine revelation, confusion will increase and the understanding of God's true character shall be tarnished.

Instead of bringing light to the situation, Job's lack of spirituality only darkened it.

Because Job spoke of things beyond his spiritual ability to understand, all he really did was darken the counsel of the very One he sought to please.

Job 38:3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Whenever men sin against God, they will be required to gird up their loins and ultimately stand before Him, needing to give a full account for their actions.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:3

Gird up now thy loins like a man— . . . The idea here is, "Make thyself as strong and vigorous as possible; be prepared to put forth the highest effort." God was about to put him to a task which would require all his ability—that of explaining the facts which were constantly occurring in the universe.

Job was now required to stand before the Lord and give a full account of his previous words and thoughts.

The Lord demanded this of him, and it would prove impossible for Job not to give an account concerning his sin.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 38:1-3

Our darkening the counsels of God's wisdom with our folly, is a great provocation to God.

Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Whenever men speak of God, there is an inference that they have both known God, and have been with Him. To this the Lord asks Job if he had been with the Lord in the beginning.

Since Job had presumed to know so much of the Creator, could he recall the celestial and awe-inspiring events of creation?

Job 38:5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

It is one thing for a man to lay out the plans for a small earthly abode; it is quite another thing to be the Architect and Creator of both the heavens and earth.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:5

The earth is represented as a building, the plan of which was laid out beforehand, and which was then made according to the sketch of the architect. It is not, therefore, the work of chance or fate. It is laid out and constructed according to a wise plan, and in a method evincing infinite skill.

Job 38:6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

Since all buildings and structures must have a foundation to sit upon, what, then, is the earth's?

If Job could not answer this question concerning what the earth sat upon and where it had gained its beginning, then how could he be so confident in speaking of its Creator?

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Whenever a great work is completed, it is reason for joy and celebration. The earth's creation was no different. The expression *shouted for joy* describes the angels' response to a moment of unparalleled beauty in the distant past, when after creation, all the creatures in it, shouted for joy, for the marvelous work they had observed being accomplished.

Job 38:8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

We know that large aquifers in the earth contain huge volumes of water and that during the flood these aquifers burst open and filled the earth.

In 2014 scientists observed a body of water trapped in the earth's mantle that is three times the volume of all the oceans. Geophysicist Steve Jacobsen from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and seismologist Brandon Schmandt from the University of New Mexico, published "Dehydration Melting at the Top of the Lower Mantle" in the journal *Science*, their findings concerning a large reservoir of water under the earth's crust, showing "strong proof that Earth's water came from inside the planet."

This discovery also disputes those who have implied that there was never enough water upon the earth, to completely cover her during the flood of Noah's time.

The truth is, there is more than sufficient water within the mantle of the earth to do such a breathtaking act, and just now scientists are confirming this.

The Weather Channel summarized this research in the following article "Massive Ocean Found Hiding 700 Kilometres beneath Earth's Surface!"

Imagine an ocean vaster than all the water on Earth's surface combined hidden 700 kilometres beneath our feet. This is the mind-boggling discovery scientists at Northwestern University have unveiled, shaking our understanding of where Earth's water comes from.

For years, scientists have debated the origins of Earth's water. Comets were prime suspects, delivering their icy payloads through impacts, but this new discovery throws a wrench in that theory. Researchers, led by geophysicist Steven Jacobsen, stumbled upon a colossal water reservoir trapped within the Earth's mantle, a scorching hot layer beneath the crust. This hidden ocean, three times the size of its surface counterparts, is cradled within a mineral called ringwoodite.

Scientists deployed a network of 2,000 seismographs across the US, listening to the whispers of the Earth itself. By analysing the faint tremors from over 500 earthquakes, they noticed a curious slowdown in the seismic waves as they passed through specific regions of the mantle. This slowdown hinted at the presence of water, acting like a sponge within the rock.

This discovery completely rewrites our understanding of Earth's water cycle. It suggests water isn't just a surface phenomenon, but potentially exists within the mantle, migrating through cracks and crevices. Jacobsen emphasises the importance of this reservoir, stating, "Without this internal water source, Earth's surface would likely be a barren landscape, with only mountain peaks peeking out from a vast ocean."

The implications are far-reaching. Scientists are now eager to gather seismic data worldwide to see if this hidden ocean is a global phenomenon. This could revolutionise our understanding of how water moves within our planet, a fundamental process shaping Earth's history and potentially influencing the existence of life.

The Lord asks Job, "Who set the bounds of these watery eruptions so that they did not completely immerse the land above?"

Job 38:9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

Continuing to liken the earth to a child, the Lord describes the clouds as its swaddling blanket.

Geneva Study Bible, Job 38:9

When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a {g} swaddlingband for it,

(g) As though the great sea was but as a little baby in the hands of God to turn to and fro.

Job 38:10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

When we imagine the vast power of the seas in the early days of creation, when darkness lay upon the waters of the deep, we see why God asked Job if he knew Who put bounds upon them.

Who is this God Who can set even boundaries on the vast oceans of water that encompass the earth?

What heavenly and spiritual creature is so great that He could create a door strong enough to hold back the mighty seas?

Nations spend large amounts of financial resources on creating levees, but if a storm is sufficiently strong, it will easily, and with little effort, overcome anything that man has constructed.

Yet, God is sufficiently able to separate the dry land from the sea, so that each might fulfill its distinct purpose for man.

Job 38:11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Like a general, the Lord has commanded mighty and ferocious waves to seemingly halt, and proceed no farther than the shoreline. Regardless of how robust and proud the oceans may be, they cannot proceed beyond the boundaries the Lord has set for them.

Hence, not even the mighty oceans and seas of the earth can progress or extend themselves beyond the limits that divine will has set for them.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:11

And here shall thy proud waves be stayed—Margin, as in Hebrew, "the pride of thy waves." A beautiful image. The waves seem to advance in pride and self-confidence, as if nothing could stay them. They come as if exulting in the assurance that they will sweep everything away. In a moment they are arrested and broken, and they spread out humbly and harmlessly on the beach. God fixes the limit or boundary which they are not to pass, and they lie prostrate at his feet.

Job 38:12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

Every morning that has ever transpired upon the earth mimics the early days of creation, when the Lord commanded the light to shine out of the darkness.

None also are more removed from the Lord, than those who no longer acknowledge or believe in His role in creation, who ignorantly believe that something could arise out of nothing, yet cannot reasonably explain what this “nothing” consisted of in the first place.

Job 38:13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

Here God reveals how both divine and natural light exposes wickedness upon the earth, and prompts it to scatter.

Where true light exists, and wherever the Lord chooses to send it, darkness is completely neutralized and maintains no power whatsoever to recover itself.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:13

That the wicked might be shaken out of it—Out of the earth; that is, by the light which suddenly shines upon them. The sense is, that the wicked perform their deeds in the darkness of the night, and that in the morning light they flee away. The effect of the light coming upon them is to disturb their plans, to fill them with alarm, and to cause them to flee. The idea is highly poetic. The wicked are engaged in various acts of iniquity under cover of the night. Robbers, thieves, and adulterers, go forth to their deeds of darkness as though no one saw them. The light of the morning steals suddenly upon them, and they flee before it under the apprehension of being detected. “The dawn,” says Herder, “is represented as a watchman, a messenger of the Prince of heaven, sent to chase away the bands of robbers.” It may illustrate this to observe that it is still the custom of the Arabs to go on plundering excursions before the dawn. When on their way this faithful watchman, the aurora, goes out to spread light about them, to intimidate them, and to disperse them; compare the notes at Job 24:13–17.

Job 38:14 It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

When we observe images of the earth from space, we realize the great distinction between where the sun shines and where it does not. When this light hits the earth, it is then seemingly transformed as clay would be when pressed upon by a seal.

Hence, whereas previously the earth in darkness seems flat and without any shape or form, upon exposure to the sun’s light, the beauty, shape, color, and contour of the earth is vividly and wonderfully exposed.

It is this seemingly miraculous transformation that the Lord speaks of, which occurs daily, continually revealing the power of light overcoming darkness.

Job 38:15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:15

their light—by which they work; namely, darkness, which is their day (Job 24:17), is extinguished by daylight.

high—Rather, “The arm uplifted” for murder or other crime is broken; it falls down suddenly, powerless, through their fear of light.

The Lord again draws a picture of how His light affects wicked men. Light is as dangerous to the sinner's plans and devilish schemes, as darkness is to the innocent.

Job 38:16–17 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

¹⁷ Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Even today it is true, that only a small percent of the world's oceans have been explored, and that eighty percent of the oceans has not been either mapped or explored by humans.

Just as men are ignorant of the mysteries of the deep, and the great vents and springs which lie under the oceans and seas of the world, so are they equally ignorant of what transpires at death. This door, the Lord reveals is locked, and none aside from Him really knows what lies on the other side.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:17

Man during life does not even “see” the gates of the realm of the dead (“death,” Job 10:21); much less are they “opened” to him. But those are “naked before God” (Job 26:6).

The Lord asks Job these questions, in order that he might become more fully aware of his own spiritual ignorance.

In his previous responses, Job had manifested an air of religious arrogance, and the Lord now sought to remove this ungodly and unhealthy pride from him.

Job 38:18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

Focusing on the size and breadth of the earth, the Lord now inquires of Job if he can truly comprehend the world he was born into.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Job 38:18

It is presumptuous for us, who perceive not the breadth of the earth, to dive into the depth of God's counsels.

We can never truly know the reasons for what God does, or for what He divinely allows to be done.

This wisdom is far beyond any man, and this lack of understanding should actually lead him to become more subject to divine rule—simply because if man cannot properly understand the Lord's works, he should be wise enough to refrain from questioning His ways and methods in dealing with man.

No doubt the sovereignty of God is far more mysterious and hidden from man, than even the hidden mysteries of creation.

Job 38:19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

In Job's day and according to man's understanding—or lack of it, rather—the true origin of light and darkness and where they originated from was virtually unknown, though each day and night upon the earth seemingly rotated, when also darkness and light took turns replacing the other.

Job 38:20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:20

The sense seems to be this: God asks Job whether he was so well acquainted with the sources of light, and the place where it dwelt, that he could take it under his guidance and reconduct it to its place of abode.

And that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?—The same idea is repeated here. Light has a home; a place of abode. It was far distant—in some region unknown to man. Did Job know the way in which it came, and the place where it dwelt so well, that he could conduct it back again to its own dwelling?

Job 38:21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

The Lord knew Job could never answer His questions, so now He addresses how much pride must exist in Job to assume he had learned so much during his extremely brief existence on the earth.

Using irony and a bit of mockery, the Lord intends to reveal to Job his childish thoughts of possessing wisdom.

Hence, though Job was only a temporal creature of God, and had walked the earth but for a very short time, he still felt himself fully qualified to question the Lord's oversight of his life.

***Job 38:22–23 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,
23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?***

The Lord likens the formation of both snow and hail as a treasure. There are so many natural occurrences in the earth, which men have become so accustomed to, that they have lost the great wisdom it required to bring them into being in the first place.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:23

Which I have reserved—As if they were carefully treasured up to be brought forth as they shall be needed. The idea is, that they were entirely under the direction of God.

The time of trouble—Herder “the time of need.” The meaning probably is, that he had kept them in reserve for the time when he wished to bring calamity on his enemies, or that he made use of them to punish his foes; compare the notes at Job 36:31–33.

Against the day of battle and war—Hailstones were employed by God sometimes to overwhelm his foes, and were sent against them in time of battle; see Joshua 10:11; Exodus 9:22–26; Psalm 18:12–13; compare the notes at Isaiah 29:6.

Great battles have often been determined by freezing cold, great storms, or extreme heat, all of which the Lord states He frequently employs to stop the plans of evil men.

Job 38:24 By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 38:24

is . . . parted—parts, so as to diffuse itself over the whole earth, though seeming to come from one point. Light travels from the sun to the earth, ninety millions of miles, in eight minutes.

which scattereth—rather, “And by what way the east wind (personified) spreads (scattereth) itself.” The light and east wind are associated together, as both come from one quarter, and often arise together (Jon 4:8).

Job 38:25–28 *Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;*

²⁶ *To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;*

²⁷ *To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?*

²⁸ *Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?*

Progressing to rain and how it brings water to dry places upon the earth, even where men do not live, the Lord asks Job if rain has a father.

Ultimately, the Lord holds an endearing affection for all creation, and most notably the earth, and the wonderful processes which He has established to maintain her fruitfulness and abundance.

Job 38:29 *Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?*

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:29

Out of whose womb came the ice?—That is, who has caused or produced it? The idea is, that it was not by any human agency, or in any known way by which living beings were propagated.

And the hoary frost of heaven—Which seems to fall from heaven. The sense is, that it is caused wholly by God; see the notes at Job 37:10.

Job 38:30 *The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.*

Not only did God create water, but He also designed it so that at low temperatures it would change its form to become like hard stone.

The transformation of water from liquid to then a solid, is directly attributed to the wisdom of God.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:30

The formation of ice is thus appealed to as a proof of the wisdom of God, and as a thing which Job could not explain. No man could produce this effect; nor could Job explain how it was done.

Job 38:31 *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?*

Referring to the Pleiades, also spoken about in Job 9:9, which usher in the spring, and Orion, which foretells of winter, the Lord asks Job if he can bind either of them.

-Ultimately, men have no power whatsoever to either contain or restrain the courses of the stars.

Yet, if men do not have the power to prevent the stars from appearing at their respective times, how could they ever presume to believe that they could stop God's will from being orchestrated upon the earth?

Job 38:32 *Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?*

The Lord now asks Job if he can make the stars and constellations appear in their respective seasons.

By providing specific names of the stars, the Lord reveals how intimately connected He is to the constellations and individual stars of heaven.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 38:32

He calleth them all by names—This idea is also taken from a military leader, who would know the names of the individuals that composed his army. In smaller divisions of an army, this could of course be done; but the idea is, that God is intimately acquainted with all the hosts of stars; that though their numbers appear to us so great, yet he is acquainted with each one individually, and has that knowledge of it which we have of a person or object which we recognize by a name. It is said of Cyrus, that he was acquainted by name with every individual that composed his vast army.

Job 38:33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

The heavens exhibit a dominion over the earth; they affect things like the ocean's tides and a great many seasonal weather patterns.

By this truth the Lord hopes to impress upon Job that heaven rules the earth, and surely not the men upon the earth, heaven.

Job 38:34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 38:34

Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Thy gardens, fields, and farms; canst thou, in a magisterial way, call to and demand of the clouds to let down rain in large quantities, sufficient to water them and make them fruitful? no, thou canst not: thou mayest cry and call as long as thou wilt, not a cloud will stir, nor a drop of water be let down; rain is to be had in a suppliant way, through the prayer of faith, as by Elijah, but not in a dictatorial authoritative way: the clouds and rain are only at the disposal of the Lord; ask of him, and he will give them; but they are not to be commanded, Zechariah 10:1 [*Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*]; see Amos 5:8.

Job 38:35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are?

If Job cannot control the clouds and the manner in which they bring forth rain, is he in any better position to send lightning upon the earth?

Job 38:36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

The Lord now asks Job, Who actually imparts both natural and spiritual wisdom into man?

What also is more beautiful and mysterious as the Spirit of God imparting wisdom into the hearts of those naturally born deaf and blind to spiritual things.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

It is the Lord, Who illuminates the heart and prompts understanding to flow into it.

It is He, and none other, Who has imparted wisdom into the inward part of man, without which no man could know anything of God—either God's role in creation, or man's sin against Him.

It is undoubtedly the Lord Who is the true source of all understanding and wisdom, and those humble in heart shall joyfully and with sincere thankfulness openly confess this.

