

The 1st Speech from the Whirlwind: The Nature of the Cosmos

I. Brief Outline of God's First Speech

- A. (38:1-3) God's Opening Challenge
- B. (38:4-38) Balanced Cosmic Foundations: Everything has its place
 - 1. 38:4-7 - The Firm Foundation of the Earth
 - 2. 38:8-11 - God's Nurture of Chaotic Power
 - 3. 38:12-15 - Daytime and Justice
 - 4. 38:16-21 - Mysteries of Death, Darkness and Light
 - 5. 38:22-30 - God's Arsenal and Nurturer
 - 6. 38:31-38 - Rule of the Weather
- C. (38:39-39:30) God in the Wilderness
 - 1. 38:39-41 - Providing Food for the Lion and Raven
 - 2. 39:1-4 - Watching over the birthing of the mountain goat and hind
 - 3. 39:5-12 - Freedom of the Wild Donkey and Wild Ox
 - 4. 39:13-18 - Withholding Wisdom from the Ostrich
 - 5. 39:19-25 - Giving Strength and Majesty to the Horse
 - 6. 39:26-30 - Discernment for the Hawk and Eagle

II. Preliminary Issues:

- A. God as Sage
 - 1. God speaks in the same poetic dialogues as the friends
 - a. This casts God in the role of a sage
 - b. God as sage is obviously superior
 - 1) Prov 8:22 - God "acquired"¹ wisdom in the beginning, which is what any good sage should do²
 - 2) Prov 28 - After created the world through wisdom, God hides wisdom somewhere
 - 2. Rather than answer the charges against him as in a lawsuit, God overwhelms Job with questions that only God knows the answer to
 - a. Ancient sages employed this method in order to instruct their students regarding their lack of knowledge³
 - b. The sage led students to new insights through careful

¹ Some translations render this "created," but the Hebrew, *qanah*, means to "get" or "acquire"

² According to Prov. 4:7, this is required in order to be wise

³ An example can be found in The Papyrus Anastasi I, where Hori, the scribe attempts correct and educate his student, Amen-em-Opet. There is a section where Hori goes through a catalog of Asiatic geography and fires a barrage of rhetorical questions and challenges in order to reveal Amen-em-Opet's lack of knowledge and ability compared to his own abundance of knowledge and ability. Some of the examples of the questions in this document are, "What is it like, the Simyra of Sessi...?" or "...instruct me about Beirut, about Sidon and Sarepta." This papyrus belonged to a collection of works that were designed to educate students. An English translation of this document appears in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, edited by James Pritchard, 475-479.

questioning.

B. Lack of direct condemnation of Job

1. God does not condemn Job for sin
 - a. The effect of God's questions highlight Job's ignorance rather than condemn him
 - b. In effect, the lawsuit falls apart because Job does not have enough information to sustain a case against God
2. God's wrath is directed at Job's friends rather than Job 42:7
 - a. Job's friends required sacrifice and a mediator
 - b. Job performs the function of a mediator for them
3. Job 13:16 - Godless will not come before God
It is interesting to note that in Job's case, he did come before God

III. (38:1-3) God's Opening Challenge

A. Translation:

1. And Yahweh answered Job from the whirlwind and he said
2. Who is this who makes dark⁴ a plan⁵ by words without knowledge?
3. Gird your loins, I ask,⁶ like a hero⁷, and I will ask you and you will make me know⁸.

B. Wisdom words

1. God uses wisdom vocabulary in the opening
 - a. v.2 - Plan⁹, counsel¹⁰
 - 1) God is the one with wise instruction
 - 2) Also implies that the world is not chaotic, but has a plan, or a design, and is therefore an orderly place
 - 3) 12:13f - Job claimed God's counsel was unjust and reckless, and that there was no beneficent order

⁴ חשך - In hiphil form means "to make dark" or "obscure"

⁵ עצה - Plan, design, or counsel.

⁶ Most English translations leave the particle of entreaty, נא, untranslated

⁷ There are several words that can be translated "man" in Hebrew, such as אדם or אנוש, but this word is גבר, "geber," which means "man," is can be used of military men as warrior, mighty man, hero, etc. Examples in Jud 5:30; 2 Sam 23:1; Jer 41:16. גבור "gibbor," "warrior," appears to be interchangeable with geber when you compare Ps 18:25[Heb 26] and 2 Sam 22:16, as one text uses geber, and the other, gibbor.

⁸ ידע - Root meaning is "to know" or "knowledge." In Hiphil form it means to "make one know" or "to instruct." The word "knowledge" in verse two is from the same root.

⁹ Example: Prov 20:18;

¹⁰ Example: Prov 12:15

b. v.2,3 - Knowledge, to know

- 1) Wisdom and knowledge are often used interchangeably in the Old Testament¹¹

2. Seems to indicate that wisdom will be a major topic in God's speech

- a. God repeatedly uses various forms of the words יָדַע "know" and בִּין "understanding, discernment" as he questions Job

b. Some Examples:

- 1) 38:2 - words without knowledge
- 2) 38:3 - you will make me know
- 3) 38:4 - declare to me if you know discernment
- 4) 38:5 - surely you know
- 5) 38:18 - declare if you know
- 6) 38:21 - you know...

C. God's Expansive concern

1. God sounds Aramaic

- a. "Words"¹² uses Aramaic rather than Hebrew morphology

- 1) Masculine Hebrew plurals end in *im*
- 2) Masculine Aramaic plurals end in *in*
- 3) "Words" is spelled: *mullin* in verse 2

- b. In other places in God's speech he uses Aramaisms¹³

- c. As an intentional feature of the book, the Aramaisms give a foreign sound to Job and his friends as well as God

2. That "Yahweh," the covenant God of the Hebrews would spend so much time with Job, demonstrates God's expansive concern

- a. Exodus 6:1-6 - God reveals his name, "Yahweh"¹⁴ to Israel
- b. God's concern is not limited to Abraham or Israel
- c. God's concern is for all

D. The challenge

1. God calls Job a hero and tells him to gird his loins

- a. Girding loins was usually preparation for work or battle¹⁵

¹¹ Examples: Prov 1:7; 2:6; 2:10; 9:10

¹² מַלְלָה is an Aramaic loanword that appears rarely in the Hebrew Bible. It appears 34 times in Job, 24 times in the Aramaic portions of Daniel, twice in the Psalms, once in Proverbs, and once in 2 Samuel. It only appears 7 times in the Qumran manuscripts. David J.A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* 5 (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 35.

¹³ Examples: עֲרֹוד and פֶּרָא "wild donkey" in 39:5, עֲצָם and גֶּרֶם "bone" in 40:18. Other examples of Aramaisms in Job are: מְלִין and דְּבַר "word(s)" in 4:2, שֹׁהֵר and עֵד "witness" in 16:19, and אָחָה and בָּא "come" in 3:25. Edward L. Greenstein, "The Language of Job and its Poetic Function," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003).

¹⁴ Most English translations render "Yahweh" in all caps as "LORD" except for the 1901 ASV, which renders it "Jehovah," which is a hybrid name.

- b. Since God calls Job a hero, it looks like preparation for battle
- 2. The particle of entreaty, "I ask"
 - a. This functions to soften the imperative "gird up your loins"
 - b. May indicate that God's purpose was not to be a victor over Job as in battle, but to reconstruct his shattered faith
 - c. The only challenge God levels to Job in his speeches is not to subdue God, but subdue creation and rule it
- 3. God's appearance
 - a. 9:11-12 - Job claimed that God is not perceivable and therefore no one could question him
 - 1) God's appearance demonstrates the error of this claim
 - 2) In a sense God makes him accountable for the nature of his rule over creation in his speeches
 - b. 9:16-17 - Job believes that if God did appear it would be bad
 - 1) God would crush him with a whirlwind
 - 2) God would increase Job's wounds
 - c. 31:35-37 - Job's vehement desire was to contend with God
 - d. God's appearance in the whirlwind is a shock
 - 1) He comes to answer the legal charges of Job
 - 2) He does not increase Job's wounds
 - 3) He destroys no one

IV. (38:4-7) The Firm Foundation of the Earth

A. Translation

- 4. Where were you in my founding/establishing of the earth?
Declare¹⁶ to me if you know discernment/understanding¹⁷
- 5. Who placed her measurements? Surely you know!
Or who stretched out upon her a line¹⁸?
- 6. Upon what are her pedestals sunk?
Or who cast the stone of her corner,
- 7. When crying aloud/rejoicing together were the stars of morning
and all the sons of God shouted?

B. God's challenge

- 1. In verse 4, He literally tells Job to "testify, if you know discernment!"
- 2. God does not merely dismiss the lawsuit, but engages it
- 3. God's "cross examination" deals with the order and the design of

¹⁵ Examples: Ex 12:11; 1 Kng 18:46;

¹⁶ The Hebrew, **נִסָּח** can have legal overtones, meaning, "to testify." This implies that God does not merely dismiss the lawsuit, but engages it.

¹⁷ To "know discernment" seems to be synonymous with being wise. Prov 4:1 - "Know discernment"; Prov 4:5 - Acquiring wisdom and discernment seem to be synonymous

¹⁸ As in a measuring line

the cosmos

- a. Physical order and moral order are related in wisdom literature.
- b. Job's contentions imply that the world is not ordered properly
- c. God challenged Job to testify about the primordial founding of the earth and its design/plan
- d. Isa 46:10
 - 1) God declares the end from the beginning
 - 2. God's "purpose"¹⁹ will stand
- 3. Job is unable to testify, because he lacks the knowledge and experience to do so.
 - a. Job does not know what went into the design and plan of the cosmos
 - n. Job has darkened/clouded God's plan/design by words without knowledge

C. God the expert architect and builder

- 1. The prominent metaphor that God uses for his creative activities is the building metaphor
- 2. The world is a stable, well ordered place by God's plan and design
 - a. v.5 - God is the architect
 - b. v.5 - God is the surveyor
 - c. v.6 - God is the engineer
- 3. This implies the utmost wisdom/skill
 - a. Prov 24:3 - Wisdom is required to build a house
 - b. Ex 31:3-4 - Wise men required to build the Tabernacle
 - c. 1 Kng 7:14 - Wisdom required for the temple building
 - d. Isa 40:20 - A good artisan is "wise"
 - e. The building metaphor portrays God as ultimately wise
- 4. The Hebrew Bible's testimony on God's design
 - a. 1 Sam 2:8 - The world is on "pillars," which describes the moral order and stability of the world
 - b. Ps 75:2-3 - God keeps the pillars "steady"
 - c. Prov 9:1 - Woman Wisdom²⁰ builds her house will pillars

D. The goodness of the creation

- 1. The morning stars sang together at the creation
- 2. The sons of God shouted for joy
 - a. Sons of God often refers to heavenly beings
 - b. Examples: Job 1:6; Psalm 9:1[2 Heb]; 82:1-6
- 3. The stars and sons of God are in a parallel line together
 - a. This implies they are possibly the same or related closely

¹⁹ עצה - Plan, design, counsel

²⁰ In Proverbs 8, Woman Wisdom is God's architect for building on orderly creation. Living in devotion to Wisdom (Prov 1:20-33; 9:1-6), which includes living righteously and ethically while fearing Yahweh, will bring prosperity and the blessing of God.

- b. The "stars" may be poetic representations of the heavenly court
- c. Examples of the heavenly court and the sons of God appear in Job 1:6; Ps 29:1; 89:7
- 4. This imagery recalls Ps 148, where angels, sun, moon, and stars are all to praise God.

E. Counteracting Job's Claims

- 1. 9:5-7 - Job had claimed no stabilizing design in the world
- 2. 9:24 - For Job, instability of the design resulted in the instability of justice
- 3. For Job, the pillars of justice were tottering

F. Summary: As a wise master builder, God created a good cosmos with a solid and stable foundation, which counteracts Job's claim that the world was bad and its foundations were tottering.

V. (38:8-11) God's Nurture of Chaotic Power

A. Translation

- 8. And (who) shut the doors of Yam/Sea²¹
(when) in his bursting forth from the womb he came out? -
- 9. (when) I made a cloud his/its clothing
and a thick cloud his/its swaddling band,
- 10. and I placed upon him my decree
and I placed a bar and doors,
- 11. and I said,
"As far as here you shall come and no more,
and here will your high waves stop

B. God as a nurse

- 1. God now uses birthing imagery in describing creation
- 2. This would have been shocking to an Ancient Near Eastern reader
 - a. The Sea was considered a dangerous, unpredictable and hostile place
 - b. A common Ancient Near Eastern view of the Sea is that it embodied a hostile, chaotic force opposed to the deity and had to be defeated in order for justice and order to prevail.²²

²¹ The Hebrew does not use a direct article "The" sea, but simply says "Sea," or "Yam" in Hebrew, which makes this sound like a personal name. "Yam" or "Sea" is a typical image of a chaos deity or monster that is hostile to order and creation. For more, see the section on mythopoeic language and imagery in the introductory material in these notes.

²² In Sumerian and Babylonian literature, Marduk slays Tiamat (Sea) and creates an orderly cosmos with Tiamat's carcass. In Ugaritic literature, Baal slays Yam (also identified as the serpent, the dragon, and the

3. There is nothing of a primordial battle between Yahweh and Yam
 - a. Instead, Yahweh puts a diaper on Yam!
 - b. God places limits on Yam, as though Yam were a child who needed to learn limits

C. A different perspective for Job on creation

1. Job seems to accept the primordial battle motif in his cosmology
 - a. 9:7 - God trampled the waves of the sea
 - b. 9:13 - The helpers of Rahab bowed beneath God
 - c. 7:12 - God placed a guard over the sea and dragon
 - d. 26:12-13 - God stilled the sea and struck down Rahab
 - e. The primordial battle motif appears in other parts of scripture
 - 1) Ps 74:13-17 - The Psalmist reminds God of his primordial victories which brought life and order to the world, and prays for God to rise up in battle against his enemies again.
 - 2) Ps 89:9-11
 - 3) Isa 51:9 - Here the primordial victory imagery is applied to the Exodus and a future restoration
2. Job believes that God's "fence" was for evil purposes
 - a. The word "shut in" the sea (38:8) and "hedged in" in (3:23) are the same word in Hebrew
 - b. 7:12 - God had placed a "guard" over Job
 - c. 13:27 - God put Job's feet in the stocks
 - d. 14:5-6 - God traps humans so that they cannot enjoy life
3. God offers a larger perspective
 - a. Yam is not a rival deity to be annihilated, but an integral part of the created order!
 - 1) Yam is subject to God's nurture and care!
 - 2) Other passages also give this perspective
 - a) Psalm 95:5 - The sea is God's and he made it
 - b) Ps 24:1-2 - The earth was founded on the seas
 - b. God's "fence" is for good
 - 1) God's limit on the sea keeps it from flooding the earth
 - 2) Prov 8:29 - God assigned the sea its limits
 - 3) Ps 104:9 - God sets a boundary for the sea
 - 4) God's limitations are not unfair limitations

D. Summary: God inverts Job's understanding of how God created the world. The paradigm God offers is that of nurture rather than a primordial battle. This seems to indicate that God establishes order and justice by something other than violent, coercive power.

VI. (38:12-15) Daytime and Justice time

A. Translation

12. Have you in your days commanded the morning,
made the dawn know its place?
13. To grasp hold of the extremities of the earth
and the wicked ones be shaken from it?
14. It turns itself (or transforms itself) like a clay seal
and they take their stand²³ like a garment²⁴
15. And withheld from the wicked is their light
and their exalted arm is shattered

B. The daytime as an agent of justice

1. This is the first explicit reference to justice in God's speech
 - a. The light brings warmth and life to biological life, but that is not what God emphasizes here
 - b. Ancient people did not see the dawn as a guarantee, but as a gracious, daily reenactment of God
2. The morning does not happen on its own,
 - a. God commands the morning
 - b. The dawn has an assigned "place" in the created order
3. The dawn is more than just a sunrise. Light is an element of justice which God bring out through several images:
 - a. The dawn's shaking effect
 - 1) The dawn shakes the wicked out like shaking vermin from a cloth
 - 2) Every morning the dawn "polices" the earth
 - b. The dawn's transforming effect
 - 1) The dawn makes the wicked stand out
 - 2) A clay seal's gives the clay features that stand out
 - 3) The dawn makes the wicked obvious
 - c. The dawn's withholding effect
 - 1) The "light" of the wicked is the darkness, where they prefer to live and operate. The wicked start their "day" in the darkness of the night
 - 2) The dawn takes away the light of the wicked, which is the darkness

²³ Or, "they stand out"

²⁴ It is unclear as to what the significance of "garment" is in the second line of verse 14, especially since it is parallel to the line about being transformed as a clay seal. Marvin Pope emends וַיִּתְּצֵבּוּ "and they take their stand" to וַיִּתְּצֵבּוּ "and it is dyed" because it fits better as a parallel to the first line. However, there does not appear to be any textual warrant for an emendation. The question is who or what is the referent to "they take their stand" וַיִּתְּצֵבּוּ. Since "the earth" הָאֶרֶץ is singular, and "the wicked" רָשָׁעִים is plural, the ones who take their stand is probably a reference to the wicked. Therefore, "they take their stand" is a reference to dawn's light making the wicked visibly stand out. John Hartley renders this verse as, "The earth takes its shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment."

4. Everything in the created order has its "place"
 - a. God said he made the dawn to know its "place"
 - b. Prov 8:22-31 - Through wisdom, the world is orderly and each component has its place
 - c. Ps 104:19-23 - Everything has its place in the created order

C. This answers several of Job's contentions about God's justice

1. 7:2-3 - God has allotted deep darkness to Job
2. 9:22-24 - God prevents justice on the earth
3. 10:3 - God oppresses humans and favors the wicked
4. 12:22 - God overpowers the light with darkness
5. 21:7-17 - God does nothing to the wicked

D. Summary and reflection: God points out that he is not uninvolved in the daily execution of justice in the world. God commands the dawn, which is not only an element of creation, but an element of justice and order. The earth is not given over the darkness and deep gloom, but is cleansed of the wicked daily by the light. It is important to note that God uses the dawn to limit the wicked, but he does not destroy them with it.

VII. (38:16-21) The Mysteries of Death, Darkness and Light

A. Translation

16. Have you come in to the springs of the Sea?
And in the recesses of the deep have you walked about?
17. Have the gates of death been uncovered to you,
and the gates of deep darkness/death shadow have you seen?
18. Have you gotten understanding even of
the expanses of the earth?
Testify²⁵ if you know all of her/it!
19. Where is this - The way/path of the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where is its place,
20. that you would take it to its territory/boundary
and that you would understand/discern the paths of its house.
21. You know, for then you were brought forth
and the number of your days are many!

B. The Dark Underworld

1. The subterranean waters are references to the underworld
 - a. Ancient Near Eastern peoples believed that the primordial chaos waters were restricted to a domain below the earth
 - b. Descriptive phrases that refer to the underworld:

²⁵ הִגִּד can be used in a legal context in the sense of "testify" rather than merely "declare." This fits with the legal motif in Job.

- 1) Springs/sources of Yam. Yam was the name of the primordial chaotic Sea, which God subdues and brings to order
- 2) The Deep. The Sea was relegated to a dark place under the earth
- 3) Gates of Death - All people must pass through these gates in order to reach Mawet (Mot), the king of the underworld, who was also a rival deity
- 4) Deathly Darkness - The underworld was a shadowy place of deep gloom and darkness
- 5) The expanses of the earth - Subterranean caverns of the underworld
 - c. Hebrews usually called the underworld "Sheol."
2. God reveals that there is a "place" for death and darkness
 - a. Darkness has a "place" as well as the light
 - b. Darkness has a "territory"
 - c. Darkness as a "dwelling" or "house"
3. God implies that he takes the darkness to its "territory"
 - a. God knows the path to its house, and seems to take it there
 - b. Darkness is not an aberration, but a part of the created order
4. The legal motif
 - a. God challenges Job to "testify" if he knows it all
 - b. Job cannot testify because he has no first hand knowledge
 - c. Job cannot maintain his lawsuit because he does not have all of the facts

C. This answers Job

1. Job reveals his beliefs about the underworld
 - a. 3:16-19 - Sheol is a place of rest, freedom, and equality
 - b. 10:21-22 - It is a place of darkness and chaos
 - c. 14:13-15 - Sheol is a potential refuge from God
 - d. 17:11-15 - It is a place of hopelessness
 - e. 23:16-17 - The death shadow, or deep darkness, hides one from God
 - f. 24:16-17 - Deep darkness/death shadow is a friend of the wicked
 - g. Apparently, Job believes death is beyond the domain of God, perhaps even a rival, which would reflect typical Ancient Near Eastern thought
2. Job cannot report on the underworld, since he has no personal knowledge of it. All he can do is speculate based on tradition.
3. Death is not beyond the lordship of God

D. Summary and reflection: God shows that by his design, the darkness has a "place" as well as the light. There is nothing that exists that is beyond God's lordship, not even death itself. Neither is hostile or threatening to God. It is

important to note that God does not eradicate death and darkness, but assigns places to them within prescribed limits. Death resides behind "gates," and darkness as a "place," a "territory," and a "dwelling." That there is a place for both light and darkness seems to indicate that there is a sort of balance in the created order placed there by God's design.

VIII. (38:22-30) God's Arsenal and Nurturer in the Sky

A. Translation:

22. Have you come to the treasuries/storehouses of snow
and the treasuries/storehouses of hail of you seen,
23. which I have withheld for a time of trouble,
for a day of battle and war?
24. Where is this - The way/path light is divided/distributed,
(or) the east wind scatters upon the earth?
25. Who cleaved for the flood a channel
and a way/path for the lightning of thunders,
26. to send rain upon the earth of no man,
the wilderness (where) no human is in,
27. to satisfy waste and desolation
and to cause growth of a growing place for grass?
28. Is there for the rain a father?
Or who gave birth to the reserves of dew?
29. From whose womb came out the frost/ice?
And the hoar frost of the heavens, who gave birth to it?
30. Like a stone, the waters thicken
and the face of the deep compacts.

B. God's use of water

1. This passage reveals that the weather is not a random occurrence,
but has a distinct purpose and plan by God
2. The snow and hail
 - a. God keeps them in a storehouse for a time of trouble or war
- As darkness has a "place," the hail has a "time"
 - b. One could see these storehouses as a divine arsenal
 - c. Examples:
 - 1) Ex 9:18-26; Ps 78:47-48 - Against the gods of Egypt
 - 2) Josh 10:11 - Against human foes, such as Adoni-Zedek
 - 3) Isa 30:30 - As an instrument of judgment
3. Light has a path and distribution, indicating order and a plan
4. The east wind
 - a. Came in from the desert, and so was dry
 - b. Most references to the East wind are associated with drought

judgment, or calamity

- 1) Gen 41:6 - Seven ears of corn withered by it
- 2) Ex 10:13 - Brought a plague of locusts to Egypt
- 3) Jer 18:17 - Scatters the people

c. God says that the East Wind has a "way" or "path"

5. The storm

- a. God cut a "channel" for the flood, or rain torrents
- b. God made a "way" or "path" for the lightning
- c. Rain is not an arbitrary occurrence. but a sign of God's nurture to satisfy the land's thirst
- d. The locus of God's nurture: Uninhabited wasteland
 - 1) Rain is usually a tool of God to give or withhold his blessing
 - a) Deut 11:16-17; 28:1-12
 - b) 1 Kgs 8:35-36
 - c) Jer 3:1-3
 - d) Ezek 34:26
 - 2) Here God gives it to the wilderness
 - a) This is a place devoid of human life
 - b) The wilderness usually had a negative connotation
 - Isa 14:17; 27:10 - A forsaken place
 - Jer 4:26; 51:53 - Place of judgment
 - Lam 4:19 - Place where attackers are
 - c) 30:1-8 - Job believes the wilderness was a morally reprobate place
 - 3) God does not mention giving rain to the civilized land, but to the uninhabited wilderness

6. The origin of the weather

- a. Many Ancient Near Eastern Cultures had weather deities
 - Ugaritic deity was Ba'al Hadad, or just Baal
- b. God questions Job concerning the origin of the weather using the procreation language
 - 1) Pagan cultures had traditions about weather deities controlling the weather
 - 2) God goes beyond controlling to weather to the creation of water itself. Where did it come from?
- c. The syntax of the question, "Has the rain a Father?" expects a negative answer
 - 1) If the rain has no father, then where did it come from?
 - 2) Job cannot answer these questions

7. Versatility of water

- a) It can be rain
- b) It can freeze and be used by God for other purposes

C. Addresses some of Job's contentions

1. 12:13-15 - God uses the weather to destroy
 - God demonstrates that the weather nurtures as well
2. 30:1-8 - The wilderness as a morally reprobate place
 - a. Job believes that he has unjustly been thrust into the proverbial "wilderness,"
 - 1) He no longer lives in the privileged circles (29:1ff), which he believed to be a sign of God's favor
 - 2) He now lives on the "margins" of society
 - b. God has demonstrated that he does not ignore the wilderness, but the wilderness is subject to his nurture

D. Summary and Reflection: God has demonstrated that the weather operates according to his plan to both give blessing and judgment. More significantly, God is continuing to transform Job's understanding of how God operates in the world. God's care for the wasteland, a place humans often consider hold with contempt as a God-forsaken, morally reprobate place, demonstrates his gratuitousness and freedom. There is no inherent piety or moral value in the wilderness itself. God nurtures it simply because he chooses to, which demonstrates grace. The wilderness is not a God forsaken place after all! This demonstrates that God's concern is not limited, but extends to all of his creation. This stands in contrast to the care and concern of humans, which is typically much more limited than God's. The human tendency would be to not water the wasteland and selfishly keep it. God does not operate in this way. His concern is for all of his creation, not a select few.

IX. (38:31-38) Ruling of the Weather

A. Translation:

31. Can you bind fast the bands of Kimah²⁶
or the cords of Kesil²⁷ can you open?
32. Can you bring forth the Mazzaroth²⁸ in their time?
And the Ayish²⁹ with her sons can you lead them?
33. Do you know the statutes of the heavens?
whether you can establish their rule on the earth?
34. Can you lift up to the dark cloud your voice,
and a multitude of waters cover you?
35. Can you send forth lightnings and they go?
and they say to you, "Here we are!"
36. Who puts in the cloud coverings³⁰ wisdom,

²⁶ Traditionally identified as Pleiades

²⁷ Traditionally identified as Orion

²⁸ Most English translations leave this untranslated. It is likely a reference to the constellations, and could therefore be rendered "constellations."

²⁹ Traditionally identified as the Bear

- or who gives to my tent of clouds³¹ understanding?
 37. Who counts the clouds in wisdom?
 And the waterskins of the heavens who tilts?
 38. when the dust has been poured out for the casting³²
 and the clods are clung together?

B. Leading, binding and commanding the stars

1. The governance of the stars?
 - a. There is a "statute" for the heavens
 - b. The heavens have a "rule" over the earth
2. The weather and the stars are associated in this passage
 - a. Constellations appear and disappear with the seasons
 - b. Ancient peoples believed that the stars actually caused the changing of the seasons
 - c. There is a Rabbinic tradition that explains that God brought on the great flood by removing two stars from Pleiades, and then taking two stars from Ursa Minor to replace them in order to end the flood³³
 - d. If you can control the stars, you control the weather
 - e. In effect, God asks Job if he can control the stars so as to bring in the changing of the seasons
3. Other Old Testament Passages
 - a. Gen 1:14 - The lights in the dome of the sky
 - 1) They were to be for signs, seasons, days, and years
 - 2) Stars are related to the ordering of days and seasons
 - 3) This order is necessary for life
 - b. Gen 1:16 - The stars (along with the moon) rule the night
 - The text does not tell us how they "rule" or "govern"
 - c. Jud 5:20 - The stars in battle in a poetic context
 - 1) The stars "fought from Heaven"

³⁰ See next footnote

³¹ The difficult words in verse 36, *טְהוֹת* *tuhôt*, and *שְׁכָנִי* *sekwî*, has led to a variety of proposals. Marvin Pope suggests that these refer to the Egyptian deity, Thoth, and the Coptic name for Mercury/Hermes, Souchi. Robert Gordis suggests that they are the ibis, which was believed to be able to foretell the rising of the Nile, and the cock, which was believed to be able to forecast the rain and the dawn. The NASB renders these as, "the innermost being" and "the heart." The RSV renders it as clouds and mist. It seems best to follow Norman Habel's proposal, which involves repointing the Masoretic Text from *שְׁכָנִי* to *שֶׁכֶןִי* "my booth/pavilion/tent," which accords well with the imagery the clouds as God's booth/tent (Ps 18:11 [12 Heb]), and to connect *טְהוֹת* with the root, *טוּחַ* "cover," which in this context would refer to cloud cover or canopy. This seems to fit the context the best and does not necessitate an emendation of the consonantal text.

³² Casting, as in iron casting, where you pour the casting into a mold and it hardens

³³ Ellen Robbins, "The Pleiades, the Flood, and the Jewish New Year," In *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A Levine*, edited by Robert Chazon, William W. Hallo, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 330-339. There is also a discussion of astronomical passages in, G.R. Driver, "Two Astronomical Passages in the Old Testament," *JTS New Series* 7 (1956): 4. For more on this passage, see also, Norman Habel, *The Book of Job* (OTL; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 504, and Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2003), 253.

- 2) Result: A torrent swept away the enemy, Sisera
- 4. Do the stars actually have anything to do with the weather?
 - a. It would seem that we are left with two options:
 - 1) The Bible is incorrect
 - 2) The stars actually do have something to do with the weather and we just don't understand it (yet).
 - b. Another Option: Perspective
 - 1) The Bible speaks of the sun rising and setting
 - a) Scientists understand that the earth revolves around the sun
 - b) However, from a human perspective, we say the sun rises and sets
 - c) Anything else would might have been unintelligible to ancient peoples
 - 2) In a similar way, one could speak of the stars rising, or as in this text, the stars being loosed, bound, or led across the sky.
 - a) This would not be an inaccurate statement any more than speaking of the sun rising
 - b) We must remember that the Bible is not meant to be a science book
 - c) It is analogical in nature, it speaks in categories that humans can understand. Examples:
 - 1 - God's Right Arm
 - 2 - God inclines his ear
 - 3 - God resides in the temple
 - c. Commanding the sun to rise, or leading and binding the stars have to do with the ordering of days and seasons
- 4. God can command the weather with his voice
- 5. God places "wisdom" in the clouds
 - a. They bring water, life, and nourishment
 - b. They can also rain down judgment
 - c. The clouds know what to do and when to do it
 - d. Humans, on the other hand, cannot even begin to understand how to control the weather

C. Answers to Job

- 1. 9:5-9ff - God seals up the stars and the sun
 - a. In chapter 9, Job claims God shakes the earth out of its place, that the pillars and foundations of the earth are tottering
 - b. God has caused the world to go haywire
 - c. 9:22-24 - God destroys both the good and bad
- 2. 12:13-25 - Claims the weather is arbitrary and destructive
- 3. 28:12-28 - Job claimed God hid wisdom away
 - a. It is not in the land of the living

- b. God only gave decrees and statutes, but not wisdom
- c. The only thing God gives is a command to fear God
- d. In contrast, God says he gives "wisdom" to the clouds

D. Summary and Reflection: God demonstrates that he controls the weather and that it is not an arbitrary occurrence. The universe is not out of control as Job had claimed. God has provided "wisdom" and "understanding" for the clouds so that they act in an orderly manner to rain and bring life and nourishment to the earth. When God speaks of commanding the stars, loosing, leading, and binding them, this seems to indicate that he operates the weather on a daily basis. Therefore, the weather is not an arbitrary occurrence.

X. Summary and Reflection on the first part of the first speech

A. Issues of Cosmology

1. Job wished to contend with God about his guilt or innocence
2. Job accused God of not upholding justice
3. Why does God answer with cosmological questions?
 - a. Is God evading the issues and accusations?
 - 1) Is God telling Job that he is all powerful and Job has no right to question him?
 - 2) This doesn't appear to be the case
 - a) God's power was never the issue in Job
 - b) If this is what God does, he would have confirmed Job's contention that God is a big bully (9:12, 16-19, 30-31; 12:16-25).
 - b. Discussion of the nature of the created order is indirectly a discussion of the character of God
 - 1) One can tell something about the creator by looking at his creation
 - 2) A world where justice is the norm or not the norm says something about the creator
 - c. Cosmology affects one's belief system and behavior. Some examples of cosmological beliefs:
 - 1) The universe happened by chance, and everything continues to happen by chance
 - 2) The universe was created inherently evil
 - 3) The universe was created inherently good
 - 4) The universe was not created, it is a figment of the imagination
 - 5) There is good purpose and meaning behind everything that happens

B. Meaningless?

1. Some see God as showing Job that the world is an absurd place
 - a. There is no rhyme or reason as to why things happen, they just happen
 - 1) Some claim God says the world is an amoral place³⁴
 - 2) Some claim God says the world is absurd, or without meaning.³⁵
 - b. The rain falls on the desert, what sense does that make?
 - c. There is no mention of humans, so the world continued to happen without regard for humans
2. A closer reading demonstrates that God is involved
 - a. God limits the waters of Chaos
 - b. God stores the hail for a time of trouble or war
 - c. God commands the storm and it answers

C. Nagging questions

1. Why does God act as a midwife to the Sea? Why does he only limit it, but not annihilate it?
2. Why does God assign a "place" for the darkness? Why doesn't God just eradicate the darkness?
3. Why does God every morning "shake out" the wicked as from a garment? Why doesn't he destroy them?
4. Why does God care about the wasteland and the desert? Why does he give rain there? Why doesn't God even mention giving rain to where humans live?

³⁴ Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, edited by Harry M. Orlinsky (New York: KTAV, 1976), 366; Repr. from *HUCA* 37 (1966).

³⁵ Dermot Cox, *The Triumph of Impotence: Job and the Tradition of the Absurd* (Roma: Universita Gregoriana Editrice, 1978).

XI. The Second Part of God's First Speech: God in the Wilderness

A. Moves from cosmic foundations to the animals

1. The theme in the first part of the speech: Cosmic Foundations

Key ideas related to God and the nature of his rule:

- a. Stability
- b. Order
- c. Justice
- d. Gratuitousness
- e. Balance
- f. Nurture

2. The theme in the second part of the speech: Cosmic Governance

- a. Order
- b. Nurture
- c. Balance
- d. Gratuitousness
- e. Freedom

B. The Wild as Moral Location

1. Introduction to the wilderness

- a. Mentioned briefly in the first part of the first speech (38:26) God causes rain on the wilderness and wastelands
- b. Some Biblical portrayal of the wilderness
 - 1) Jer 4:7; 50:33-40; 51:36-43
 - 4) Isa 13:20-22; 34:5-15
 - 3) Mic 1:8; Mal 1:3
- c. Wilderness was often seen as a God-forsaken, detestable place

2. Ancient attitudes toward animals of the wild

- a. Danger:
 - 1) In ancient times, animals were seen as an anarchic power that needed to be limited, not like modern times when animals need to be protected from humans
 - 2) People did not have zoos and such to watch wild animals for amusement
 - 3) The only exception were kings, who at times captured wild, fearsome animals and displayed them in order to show off their strength and cunning.
- b. The Royal Hunt
 - 1) The king's job was to protect his dominion against hostile, anarchic forces, both animal and human

- 2) The royal hunt was one way the king preserved the integrity of his rule by vanquishing enemies and enabled further empire building³⁶
- 3) The objects of the royal hunt included lions, wild bulls, elephants, wild donkeys, deer and ostriches.

C. Job's View of the Wilderness

1. Job appears to have the same prevailing view of the wilderness as the culture around him
 - a. 29:16-17 - Job uses the language of the royal hunt to describe his defense of the needy and the stranger
 - b. 30:5-8 - Job says the wicked are thrust out from society into the wilderness
2. Job believes that God has failed in maintaining the integrity of the land through justice
 - a. 30:29 - Job feels that he has been wrongly thrust into the proverbial God-forsaken wilderness
 - b. 24:1-5 - Job believes that God has failed as king in preserving the integrity of the land

XII. (38:39-41) - Providing for the Lion and the Raven

A. Translation:

39. Can you hunt for the lion prey?
And the hunger of the young lions can you fill?
40. Whey they crouch in the dens
sit in their booth/thicket for their prowling?
41. Who establishes for the raven his food
when his children to God cries out
(and) they wander about for lack of food?

B. The main image is that of nurture

1. God implies he is the one that ultimately provides food for them
2. This would have been shocking to an ancient audience because lions were the enemies of civilization
 - a. Lions were a subject of the Royal Hunt
 - b. Ps 10:8-9 - This Psalm reflects this attitude
 - c. Job 4:8-11 - Eliphaz shares this view
 - d. For ancient peoples, the flourishing of the lion was evidence of the moral disorder of the cosmos.³⁷

³⁶ William P. Brown, *the Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 355. Browns notes examples, such as Tiglath-pileser's statement that he had gained total dominion over the enemies of his god, which included both animal and human foes.

- e. Note: The Biblical exceptions to this characterization of the lion would have been striking to an ancient audience. This usually happens in eschatological contexts:
 - 1) Isa 35:9 - The lion is non-existent
 - 2) Isa 11:6-7 - The lion has been transformed from a carnivore to a docile herbivore
 - 3. While there is no other mention of a raven in Job, there is a mention of a "cry."
- C. Answer to Job
- 1. 30:20 - Job claimed God didn't heed his cry
 - 2. However, God hears the raven's cry to God for food
 - a. If God hears the cry of the raven, wouldn't he hear the cry of those made in his image?
 - b. Other examples of God hearing the cry
 - 1) Gen 4:10 - The cry of the blood of Abel
 - 2) Gen 21:17 - The cry of Ishmael
 - 3) Ex 2:23-24 - The cry of Israel in Egypt
 - 4) 2 Sam 22:7 - The cry of David
 - 3. Not only is God involved in justice, but also in nurture of all creatures
 - 4. Nagging questions
 - a. Why these creatures that are considered anarchic and are associated with destruction and evil?
 - b. How does God feed them? Does God's provision of food for one creature necessitate the death of another innocent creature?

D. Summary and Reflection: God further inverts Job's concept of royal rule. God does not engage in royal hunts, nor does he charge Job to engage in a royal hunt. There are elements of justice in God's rule through violent means, such as the storehouse of hail that is preserved for a time of trouble and war. Alongside this is the image of God nurturing the lion and raven. This demonstrates that God cannot be reduced to a single principle. The interplay of divine justice and divine nurture is not as straightforward as Job and his friends had thought.

XIII. 39:1-4 - Watching over the birthing of the mountain goat and hind

A. Translation:

- 1. Do you know the time the mountain goats of the crag gives birth?
Do you watch/guard³⁸ the hind's travailing/birthing?

³⁷ Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 246.

³⁸ The idea behind שמר is watching over something. A participle form of this word appears in Gen 4, when Cain asks God, "Am I my brothers keeper שמר?"

2. Do you count the months they fulfill?
And (do) you know the time for her giving birth?
3. They bow down (as in childbirth).
Their children cause to cleave/split open (the birth canal).
Their pains they send away
4. Their sons become strong.
They become great/many in the field.
They go out and do not return to them.

B. God the guardian

1. God is not clueless; he knows the time for birthing
2. God watches over the birth of the mountain goats & deer
 - a. Once again, this demonstrates God's activity in the world
 - b. This particular activity brings life

C. Answer to Job

1. 7:19-20
 - a. Job accused God of being an obsessive watcher of humanity, trying to find a flaw in moral piety
 - b. God's watching is for life giving nurture
 - c. It is interesting to note that God uses the same word as he does for his "watching over" the mountain goat in 2:6, where he tells the adversary to spare/guard שמר Job's life.
2. 7:1-3; 14:3-6
 - a. Job accused God of numbering the days of humans and imprisoning them in them for misery
 - b. However, God lets the offspring go out and become strong

D. Summary and Reflection: God is not a God who imprisons, but one who cares for and nurtures his creation. His "watching" is intended to promote life.

XIV. 39:5-12 - Freedom of the Wild Donkey and Wild Ox

A. Translation:

5. Who sends out the wild ass free?
And the bonds of the wild donkey who opens?
6. (for) Whom I have placed in the desert steppe his house
and his tabernacles (in) the barrenness/saltiness
7. He laughs/mocks the sound/roar of the city.
The shouts of the driver he does not hear
8. He explores/spies out the mountains of his pasture
And after every green thing he seeks
9. Will the wild ox consent to serve you?
Will he lodge at your feeding trough?
10. Can you bind the wild ox in a furrow (with) his ropes?

- Will he harrow the valleys/lowlands after you?
11. Will you trust in him because great is his strength?
Will you leave to him your produce?
12. Will you trust in him because he will return your sowing
and (at) your threshing floor he will gather?

B. The God of freedom

1. The image of the wild donkey & his wilderness habitation
 - a. The biblical image:
 - 1) Gen 16:12 - Ishmael
 - 2) Isa 32:14 - Associated with judgment and bareness
 - 3) Jer 2:24 - Image of impropriety
 - 4) Dan 5:21 - Nebuchadnezzar
 - 5) Hos 8:9 - A symbol for Israel's faithfulness
 - b. In Ancient Near Eastern culture, the wild donkey was a symbol of the moral outlaw
 - c. The image of the wild donkey and his habitation was one of evil, lust, rebellion and isolation from God.
2. The wild ox
 - a. This was an object of the royal hunt
 - b. God asks Job not whether he can hunt the wild ox, but whether he could earn its trust and whether he would trust it
 - 1) Would the wild ox serve as a hired hand?
 - 2) Would Job entrust his business to the wild ox?
 - 3) Answer: No, because it is by nature a wild animal just as the wild donkey is.
3. Both the wild ox and wild donkey refuse domestication
4. There is a contrast between these wild animals and their domestic counterparts
 - a. v.7 - The wild donkey mocks the sound of the city and ignores the shouts of the driver
 - 1) The domestic donkey lives not in the God-forsaken wilderness, but among humans in bondage
 - 2) God has set the wild donkey free in the wilderness, a place usually thought of as God-forsaken
 - b. The same could be said for the wild ox
 - 1) The wild ox will not lodge at a human manger
 - 2) The domestic ox has his manger, but is in bondage
5. The prevailing image in this section is freedom

C. Answer to Job

1. 3:23; 19:8 - Job complains that God has walled him in and will not let him escape
2. However, God endows his creatures with freedom which demonstrates that God values freedom
3. This is the first passage that mentions human, though it is indirectly.

4. The driver does not represent the freedom that God gives, but the bondage that comes at his hands.

D. Summary & Reflection: In the bareness and scarcity of the wilderness is God and his freedom. God does not imprison his creatures because he is a God that values freedom. Outside on the margins of civilization, he sets his creatures free, including humans. Bondage comes not at the hands of God in the desert, but at the hands of humans in their civilization. It could be said that humans have constructed their own forms of bondage.

XV. Withholding Wisdom from the Ostrich (39:13-18)

A. Translation:

13. The wing of piercing cries (ie: ostrich) flap delightfully
though her pinions lack plumage³⁹
14. For she forsakes to the earth her eggs
and upon the dust they keep warm
15. And she forgets that a foot will press it down
and a living thing of the field will trample it
16. She treats harshly her sons like they do not belong to her.
though her product should be in vain, she has no fear
17. For God causes her to forget wisdom
and does not apportion discernment to her
18. At the time, proudly she flaps away,
she mocks the horse and its rider

B. Characterization of the Ostrich

1. Literally, "Wing of cries"⁴⁰
 - a. This designation is unique, no other place in scripture is this phrase used of the Ostrich
 - b. The Ostrich is usually, "Daughter of Mourning"⁴¹
 - c. In contrast to the normal designation, the Ostrich appears to be an bird of joy rather than a daughter of mourning.
2. Scripture usually portrays the Ostrich as cruel animal in uninhabitable places usually that way due to God's judgment
 - a. Isa 13:21; 34:13
 - b. Jer 50:39
 - c. Lam 4:3

³⁹ The second half of this verse is notoriously difficult. As the Masoretic stands, it says, "if/though a pinion of a stork and plumage." Interpretations and emendations are numerous. The most attractive emendation is Marvin Pope's. He emends תְּסִיָּרָה "stork" תִּסְרָה "lack," rendering the phrase, "though pinions lack plumage."

⁴⁰ כִּנּוּי רִנָּיִם "Wing of cries." רִנָּיִם could also mean rejoicings, as of a crown making a celebratory commotion.

⁴¹ בֵּת הַיְעִנָּה

3. The Ostrich was often considered the epitome of stupidity
 - a. God normally gives animals "wisdom"⁴² to survive
 - 1) This wisdom enables them to know how to care for their young and feed them
 - 2) Unlike other birds, the Ostrich appears to have none of this type of wisdom. She is different from other birds
 - a. God makes it clear that he is responsible for this
4. The Ostrich was a subject of the royal hunt
5. "Daughter of Mourning" reflected the way people viewed this creature as a detestable creature whose habitat was in the God-forsaken places of judgment

C. Connection with Job

1. 30:29 - Job begrudgingly identifies with the Ostrich
 - a. Job designates the Ostriches with the typical designation: "Daughters of Mourning"⁴³
 - b. Job believes he has been forsaken by God, and therefore, like the Ostrich, he is "God-forsaken"
 - c. Job's existence is a mournful one.
2. Job complains that God withholds wisdom
 - a. 12:20 - God removes discernment from the elders. As they get older, God grants senility rather than more wisdom
 - b. 12:24 - God strips away understanding from the leaders of the earth
 - c. 28:1ff - God, who knows the way to wisdom, hides it beyond the land of the living
3. God's unique designation appears to recharacterize the Ostrich
 - a. The Ostrich is not a mournful animal, but appears to be full of joy in spite of her condition
 - b. That the Ostrich lives in the desert is not necessarily a bad thing. God cares for animals in the wilderness
 - c. Even though the Ostrich lacks to wisdom to care for her young as other birds do, her offspring still survive
 - d. Even though the Ostrich cannot fly away, she can run away with her speed. Ostriches have been known to outrun horses.

D. An anomaly?

1. Unlike other sections of his speech, God does not challenge Job
2. God speaks of himself in the third person.⁴⁴
3. Unlike the other creatures, God does not appear to be involved in any sort of benevolent nurture for the Ostrich
4. The Ostrich itself is an anomaly

⁴² We normally call this instinct.

⁴³ בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה

⁴⁴ אֱלֹהִים *ēlôah*

- a. She has wings that flap, but do not fly
- b. She did not receive the "wisdom" to care for her young
- 5. God appears to arbitrarily withhold wisdom from the Ostrich

E. What does this say about humans?

- 1. The horse and rider is the first explicit reference to humans, and appears to be an allusion to the royal hunt
- 2. Malice
 - a. The Ostrich's cruelty comes due to a lack of wisdom
 - b. The cruelty of humans comes as a result of malice.
 - c. The source of "evil" cruelty appears to originate within the sphere of human existence, rather than in the desert.
- 3. Violence

The violence does not come at the hands of the Ostrich, but at the hands of the rider on the horse
- 4. Bondage:

For the Ostrich, and other wild animals, human culture is a place of bondage, oppression, cruelty, and death. No wonder the wild donkey prefers the wasteland and disdains the sounds of the city!

F. What does all of this say about God?

- 1. Exceptions:
 - a. Ostrich is a bird that cannot fly
 - b. Ostrich does not have birdly wisdom
 - c. Even though God created the world with rules, he is not bound by those rules, he is free to make exceptions
- 2. Freedom:
 - a. God has already demonstrated that he values freedom in the sections on the wild donkey and the wild ox
 - b. God's freedom allows God to make exceptions to the rules, as he has done in the case of the ostrich
- 3. God identifies with the marginal
 - a. Though God withheld wisdom from the Ostrich, he granted her speed. She can outrun the horse and rider
 - b. God appears not to identify with the rider, but with the animals who are being hunted
- 4. Granting stupidity can be a blessing
 - Ostrich is joyful

G. Summary: Since God does not ask a question, challenge Job to "do" anything, or to "tell" of anything, the Ostrich appears to be something that Job is merely to consider. God transforms the moral understanding of the Ostrich, wild animals, and the wilderness. Violence seems to come at the hand of the human rider on the horse rather than at the hand of the animals. Since humans have a greater share of wisdom, it can only mean that human cruelty comes as the result of

malice rather than stupidity, as in the case of the Ostrich. No royal hunt will rid the cosmos of the its chaotic elements because the chaotic elements of the cosmos do not originate from within the animal kingdom, but from within the sphere of human culture. A quick survey of human history demonstrates that chaotic anarchy erupts within human culture, leaving a trail of slavery, oppression, and death. For the animals, human culture is a place of slavery, oppression, and death, which is why the wild donkey disdains the sounds of the city. It prefers life on the margins, free from the trappings of human culture. God has transformed the moral vision of life on the margins as a place of freedom and dignity, not a place of contempt, disgrace, or lament. God has given a certain gracious dignity to the margins and the marginalized.

XVI. Giving Strength and Majesty to the Horse (39:19-25)

A. Translation:

19. Have you given to the horse valor?⁴⁵
Have you clothed his neck with thunder?⁴⁶
20. Do you cause him to quake⁴⁷ like locust?
The majesty of his snorting is terrifying
21. He paws⁴⁸ in the valley and he rejoices in strength
He comes out to meet a weapon
22. He laughs at fear and he is not dismayed
And he does not turn from the presence⁴⁹ of the sword
23. Upon⁵⁰ him rattles the quiver,
the flashing⁵¹ of the spear and javelin
24. In quaking and raging he swallows the earth
And he does not stand fast at the sound of the shofar⁵²
25. At the shofar he says, "Yeeha!"⁵³
And from afar he smells the battle
The thunder of the captains⁵⁴ and (the) shouting

B. Like previous sections, the Ostrich and Horse should be taken as a pair

1. The Horse is also an anomaly like the Ostrich - Unlike the other

⁴⁵ גְּבוּרָה - often has a military connotation, the idea of valor, strength.

⁴⁶ רָעַם - Thunder. In Arabic, mane is *ri'm*, and it is possible that the Hebrew *ra'e mah* "thunder" is a word play.

⁴⁷ רָעַשׁ - to quake, shake. Interesting word imagery. The horse comes in like a quaking swarm of locusts, which would constitute a devastating plague.

⁴⁸ יִחְפְּרוּ - Lit: They dig. The LXX uses a singular, reflecting the singular יִחְפֵּר

⁴⁹ פָּנִים - Face, Presence

⁵⁰ עַל - Upon, over. Could also mean "against," and in context may carry the idea of the horse doing battle against these objects.

⁵¹ לֶהָב - Flame, flashing.

⁵² A horn

⁵³ הָאָה he'āh - A Hebrew interjection. Similar to "Ah!" or "Aha!" or "Yeeha!" and

⁵⁴ שָׂרִים - Official, prince, captain, ruler

animals in this section, the horse is not wild or free

2. What ties the Ostrich and Horse together is fearlessness
 - a. The Ostrich laughs at the horse and rider and flees
 - b. The Horse does not turn from the battle but is eager to engage it
3. Many of the descriptions of the horse are terms used for God
 - a. Valor⁵⁵ - Job 12:13; 26:14; Ps 66:7; 106:2; Isa 33:13
 - b. Thunder⁵⁶ Job 26:14; 37:4-5; Ps 29:3; 77:18; 104:7;
 - c. Majesty⁵⁷ Job 37:22; Ps 8:1; 96:6; 104:1;
 - d. Terror⁵⁸ Job 9:34; 13:21; Ps 88:15; Ex 23:27
4. God implies that the majestic qualities of the horse exist because God put them there. God, not man clothed the horse with majesty

C. What this says about man

1. The horse seems to be the only danger to other wild animals
 - a. This seems to be an allusion to the royal hunt? Or to battle between humans?
 - b. With the horse comes the battle
 - c. With the horse comes oppression, slavery, and death
2. It is not the horse that is behind its danger, but the rider seated on it that leads the horse into battle
3. The image of the war horse is mingled with the image of warring humans on the battlefield
4. The intrepid nature of the war horse is given by God, but channeled by humans to be used for war
5. Like the section on the ostrich, this section portrays humans as the cause behind cosmic chaos, not the wild

D. What this says about God

1. God created the horse with an intrepid nature. The strength and majesty of the horse are reflections of God's character
2. Freedom: God did not prevent humans from taking something God created and using it for violent purposes
 - a. God allows humans to manipulate what is good for selfish purposes which can result in strife, oppression, and death
 - b. God could have prevented it, but chooses not to
3. Other passages
 - a. Ps 147:10 - God's pleasure is not in the valor/strength⁵⁹ of the horse
 - b. Mt 6:25-23 Jesus speaks of God's care for the birds and lilies
 - c. In this passage God speaks of his care for lions, ravens. etc.

⁵⁵ גְּבוּרָה - Power, might, valor, might acts, warriors, war, victory.

⁵⁶ רָעַם - Thunder, shout,

⁵⁷ הוֹד - Majesty, splendor, honor, glory, authority

⁵⁸ אִימָה - Terror, dreadful, fear.

⁵⁹ גְּבוּרָה - Power, might, valor, might acts, warriors, war, victory.

E. Summary and Reflection: Like the Ostrich, the War Horse is fearless due to the nature that God has given to him. Unlike the Ostrich and the other wild animals in God's speech, the Horse lives among men. God has allowed humans to channel the intrepid nature of the horse for their own purposes. Therefore, it seems that the only chaotic element in the cosmos, according to God's vision of creation, originates from humans. God allows his creation a certain level of freedom, including the freedom to oppress, kill, make war, etc.

XVII. Discernment for the Hawk and Eagle (39:26-30)

A. Translation:

26. Is it from your discernment⁶⁰ the bird of prey flies?
spreads out his wing to the south?
27. Is it because of your mouth the eagle makes lofty?
And even makes high his nest?
28. (On) the crag he dwells,
and he lodges upon the tooth of the crag
and the stronghold
29. From there he searches for food,
from afar his eyes look at it
30. And his young ones lick up blood,
and where the pierced ones⁶¹ are is he.

B. Main idea in this section is wisdom or discernment

1. The speech began with "discernment/understanding" in 38:4
 - a. God knows the physical and moral "design" of the universe
 - b. Job knows very little of the design and governance of the universe
2. The speech ends with wisdom or discernment
 - a. It is by God's wisdom that the eagle flies
 - b. The eagle flies above human culture and lives above it, not in it
 - 1) Is "discernment" just a reference to skill or more?
 - 2) The wisdom given to eagles to fly enables them to fly above the trappings of human culture and not be enslaved, oppressed, or killed by it.
3. Like the Lion and Raven, food for the eagle means the death of another creature
 - a. For the Lion and Raven, it would be another animal
 - b. Stark contrast, the eagle's food are the carcasses of humans slain on the battlefield

⁶⁰ From בִּין a typical sapiential word for - understanding, discernment, wisdom.

⁶¹ חללים "pierced ones" or "fatally wounded" usually refers to those slain in battle (Jud 9:40; 1 Sam 17:52; Jer 14:18; Ezek 31:17).

- c. Once again, God seems to identify with the wild animals rather than the civilized humans

C. Who is the predator?

1. 9:26 - Job says it is God
 - Though Job doesn't explicitly name God, he clearly implies that his predator is God
2. God seems to show that the real predators are humans in general
 - a. They go to battle in the wilderness to try and kill, subjugate, and control with contempt for the wilderness and all it stands for
 - b. They self-destruct on the battlefield
 - c. The carcasses of humans provide food for the animals

D. What this says about God

1. God allows evil and violence in his created order
2. God uses the stupidity/violence/evil of one to provide for another
 - a. God uses the carcasses of humans to care for wild animals
 - b. God used the Babylonians to punish Israel, Hab 2:1ff.
 - c. God used Judas to bring about the crucifixion of Christ
 - 1) In this case, the purpose and effect was for the good of the creation
 - a) Rom 8:18-23 - Christians as well as the creation will be freed from slavery to corruption
 - b) Rom 11:25-32 - The Jewish rejection of Christ and their subsequently becoming enemies resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles which results in offering of salvation for the Jew
 - 2) God can and does use what is evil or violent for his purposes, which are relational in nature

XVIII. Yahweh's First Concluding Challenge and Job's First Response (40:1-5)

A. Translation

1. And Yahweh answered Job and said,
2. Will a reprover contend with The Almighty?
A judge of God must answer it⁶²
3. And Job answered Yahweh and said,
4. Lo! I am small! What shall I return (answer) to you?
My hand I place over my mouth
5. Once I have spoken, and I do not answer
And twice I will not add more

⁶² The text does not specify what "it" is. "It" is feminine, so it cannot refer to God. It probably refers to God's reproof, or cross-examination.

B. The lawsuit

1. Using legal language⁶³ in verse 2, God challenges Job to respond to his cross examination
2. Job no longer pushes his suit against God
 - a. Job cannot continue to mount a case against God because God's questions demonstrate that Job does not have all the facts
 - b. God shows that he cannot be subject to an artificial law of reward and retributions constructed on incomplete or faulty knowledge
3. God's cross examination has focused on two things
 - a. Origins and Design of the physical order, and by implication of the moral order
 - b. Maintenance of the created order

C. Job's attitude

1. It is not one of praise, or restored confidence in God, but defeated silence
2. Job had already expressed his fear of this happening
 - a. 9:3-4, 19-20 - God is stronger and smarter
 - b. 9:13-14 - Job has no hope of defeating God, who overthrew the helpers of Rahab⁶⁴
 - c. Job feared that God would win the contest against him not because God is right, but because God is stronger
3. God has overpowered Job with unanswerable questions, so Job can do nothing more than place his hands over his mouth to keep from incriminating himself

D. God's response

1. God does not stop when Job withdraws his suit
 - a. God has "won" since Job appears to withdraw his suit
 - b. The book could have ended here, but does not
 - c. The fact that God does not stop indicates that God is not merely interested in "winning" an argument
2. Job may have misunderstood the moral import of what God said
 - a. God is the creator designer of the physical and moral order of the universe
 - b. The subjects of God's blessing (in this case, the wild animals) are so not because of moral piety, but God's gratuitousness
 - 1) Job and his friends appeared to believe in a two dimensional god that almost boiled down to cause and effect - reward and retribution.
 - 2) God demonstrates that he is not a "justice machine"

⁶³ reprover מוֹכִיחַ, contend רִיב, judge מוֹכִיחַ.

⁶⁴ See introductory notes on Genre and Mythopoeic language

- 3) God cares for and nurtures the desert due to his gratuitousness, not moral piety
- c. The result of Job's view of God
 - 1) Anything that appeared to be the subject of God's judgment was held with contempt
 - 2) Job and his friends, along with their culture, held the desert to be the locus of judgment, therefore the wild animals were contemptible
 - 3) Since grace did not have a place for their view of God, there appeared to be little grace in themselves
 - a) Job's friends demonstrate this in the way they treat Job
 - b) Since Job used to sit in the same seat as his friends before his calamity, his friends are a reflection of himself
- d. Job did not get this about God, so God did not stop his speech with Job's silence
- 3. God appears to be interested in a renewed relationship
 - a. It needed to be based on a more correct understand of who God is, which Job apparently has not yet grasped
 - b. God will return to the primordial scene in his next speech

E. Summary: Job cannot answer God's questions, so he pleads the 5th in order to keep from incriminating himself. It appears that God has won the contest, but God does not stop with Job's defeated silence. God is not interested in Job's defeat, but in a renewed relationship based on a better understanding of who God is, especially of the place of grace in God's character. Previously, grace had little if any place at all in Job's moral vision of God and of his creation. Job and his friends, like the culture around them, believed in reward and retribution because that is what they believed characterized their God. Yahweh demonstrates that God is not all about reward and retribution, but divine gratuitousness.

XIX. Summary of the First Speech⁶⁵

The first theme God deals with in his speech is not justice but knowledge. God demonstrates that Job was darkening God's plan by words without knowledge.

Unlike the sages who work backwards in their pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, God moves forward. The sages made observations on life then deduced from this the order of the world and what it says about the character of God. God starts from the creation itself, something that no human is capable of doing.

God goes through a select catalog⁶⁶ of items related to the creation, design, and maintenance of the world. God includes those things in his catalog that lie outside the everyday experience of humans. Some of the items are ones that humans absolutely cannot know about

⁶⁵ John Telgren, "The Character of God in the Speeches of Yahweh in the Book of Job" (M.A. thesis, Abilene Christian University, 2006), 88-93.

⁶⁶ Gerhard Von Rad, "Job XXXVIII and Ancient Egyptian Wisdom," In *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, edited by Harry M. Orlinsky (New York: KTAV, 1976).

except through divine revelation. The additions of disputation to the catalog accent the serious deficiency in knowledge that humans have concerning the nature and design of the cosmos, and therefore the serious deficiency in knowledge that humans have concerning the creator and designer of it, except through divine revelation. Divine revelation is what God engages in from the whirlwind. Unlike the sage who would use a catalog to categorize knowledge, God the sage uses it, along with disputation, to show his superior knowledge concerning the created order and how to maintain it.

Related to the theme of knowledge is accountability. As I stated above, the lawsuit feature, which grew in intensity in the dialogues, falls apart in the speeches from the whirlwind. God demonstrates that he cannot be subject to humankind's conceptions of justice because of humankind's severe lack of knowledge. The interesting thing is that God appears at all. If God is not accountable, yet appears to a litigant anyway, it demonstrates it is by God's choice and not some legal obligation. God's relationship to humans is not based ultimately on some legal relationship, but on the gracious choice of God.

The nature of God's rule figures prominently throughout the speech from the whirlwind. God uses several words that demonstrate that there are rules, limits, design, and stability in the world. God speaks of measurements, his decree on the sea to place limits on it, giving a place for both the dawn and darkness, providing a channel for the flood and the lightning, and of binding and loosing the constellations.

God's rule over his world is also one of nurture. God provides rain for the earth, food for the animals, and he watches over the birthing of wild animals. What is surprising are the subjects of God's nurture. The birthing imagery for Yam and the image of God swaddling it as though he was caring for an infant is shocking. Another surprising feature is that God provides rain for the God-forsaken wasteland and all its dangerous creatures. This demonstrates that all creatures, even the wild, anarchic creatures that are hostile to humans and civilization, are God's creatures⁶⁷ and have their place in God's creation. This, along with the Aramaisms in God's speech also demonstrates that God's interests are wider than a single man or a single people.

God also demonstrated through his treatment of the ostrich that he places anomalies and exceptions in his created order. Job argued from his own experience that there was no moral order in the world. What happened to Job is not the rule but like the ostrich is an anomaly. God is free to make exceptions in his created order when he so chooses. Justice is an element of God's created order, but it is not the only element. Grace is also an element. This has a direct bearing on the nature of divine justice.

When it comes to the nature of divine justice, it comes as no surprise when God commands the dawn to shake out the wicked from the earth like a garment, or when God reserves the hail and lightning for a time of trouble. The surprise comes when it appears that God has inverted the values of justice. The anarchic creatures of the desert, as well as the desert itself, are subjects of God's nurture. Both the dawn and the darkness have their "place" in God's creation. God provides food for wild animals from the carcasses of dead animals and humans.

At first glance, it appears that God has completely ignored humans in his first speech. However, humans do appear in several ways in his speeches. God mentions them indirectly in 39:7, 9, 18, 25 and 30. Every time God mentions humans in his speech, the picture is one of oppression, slavery, or violence. In contrast to the "inside" places of human culture and civilization, the outside is a place of freedom, dignity, and God's nurture. The contrast becomes more pronounced as the speech progresses. The final image is one of dead human carcasses on the battlefield. With this contrast, God has inverted Job's understanding of the margins. In God's

⁶⁷ The desert and its creatures are usually an image of punishment and isolation from God (Jer 27:5-7; 50:39-40; and Zeph 2:13-15).

view, the "inside" is more the locus of chaos rather than the "outside." What Job will eventually find is that the margins are not the locus of lament. The wilderness is not a contemptible, God-forsaken location. Even though Job was thrust out into the margins along with the jackals and the ostriches, he is in good company. Not only has God endowed the outside with dignity, but it is also the subject of his nurture. God has revealed a new moral vision and attempts to get Job to see this new moral vision.

What the speeches reveal is that God's concept of just rule is different from humankind's. There is a balance, or give and take, in the nature of God's justice. For God to execute justice in the way Job desires would upset that balance. What is the reader to conclude when he sees that God nurtures Yam, the desert, the anarchic animals of the wild and has given a "place" for the darkness as well as the dawn? It shows that evil is not a quality that has an independent existence from God but has its "place" in creation by God's design.

Even in modern times, ecologists recognize the principle of balance in nature. To illustrate what I mean by upsetting the balance, let me give an analogy that I am personally familiar with. In Leavenworth, Kansas, where I live, there has been an overpopulation problem with deer. In addition to the problem of auto collisions, there is the larger ecological problem of habitat destruction for other wildlife, destruction of certain trees and plants, and even the health of the deer themselves as their food supply becomes depleted. In order to restore the balance, officials issued extra deer tags, allowing people to hunt more than the usual allotment of deer. This may seem brutal on the surface. However, maintaining the balance is crucial, not only for the health of other life but the deer themselves. The overpopulation problem came about because of the destruction of the deer's natural predators. Fortunately, humans have the ability to attempt to correct the problem with the issuance of extra deer tags. This analogy demonstrates the principle of balance. In Job and his friends' previous moral vision, God should annihilate all predators and everything dangerous. This would upset the balance in creation. God nurtures them because they have a place in God's design.

There is more to the design of creation than merely justice as Job and his friends conceived it, which brings me to my next point.

God also reveals that he values freedom. When God speaks of his animals, he speaks not of the domestic ones, but the wild ones, which he has set free to live in the wilderness, far from the enslavement of civilization. In God's speeches, the desert is not a place of God-forsaken judgment but a place where God's creatures can roam free. Not only does this demonstrate that there is no place beyond the presence of God, but it also demonstrates that the creator is a God of freedom. Without this quality, the world would truly be a meaningless and absurd place.⁶⁸ However, the world is not without meaning. The meaning is not in justice, order, beauty, or any quality in creation. The meaning of the world is God in his totality. To emphasize the quality of justice as the foundation of the world is to slice away a part of God and attempt to make this slice the foundation of the world that gives it meaning. God has demonstrated that he is bigger than mere justice. In fact, God seems to raise up the principles of grace, mercy, and compassion in his first speech, which means that God, in his freedom, is free to choose grace over retribution. Justice is there, but it is only a slice of the whole picture. What God will attempt to do in his next speech is widen the perspective beyond this "slice" by raising his speech to the cosmic level.

⁶⁸ Cox, *Triumph of Innocence*, 135. Cox asserts that the message of Job affirms the sheer absurdity of the world.