

# God's Speech – Part 4

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – God answers Job and his friends by exalting his sovereign greatness over all things
2. aim – To cause us to see the sovereignty of God over every aspect of our lives
3. passage – Job 38:1-41:34

### b. outline

1. God's Sovereignty Over Creation (Job 38:1-39:30)
2. Job's Response to God's Questions (Job 40:1-5)
3. God's Sovereignty Over Man (Job 40:6-41:34)

### c. opening

1. the **structure** of the speech of God (**in two halves**)
  - a. in **chaps. 38-39**, God **asks Job** a series of *rhetorical questions* about what he has created, and whether Job was involved in the design of each element (the sovereignty of God **over creation**)
  - b. **so far in the First Half:**
    1. where were you, O Job, when I (the Creator) established the foundations of the world; when the angelic audience "*shouted for joy*" at the order, beauty, or purpose in it all?
    2. can you, O Job, like me (the Creator) set the boundaries of the sea; command the morning to be separated from the darkness; set the sun, moon, and stars in motion; control the weather?
    3. **i.e.** a series of "rapid fire" questions, each one designed to keep Job "off balance" in his *puny* nature as a *creature* (**i.e.** as one *from* the earth)
    4. **IOW:** the *sarcastic* display of God ("*you know, for you were born then*", **v. 21**) which clearly demonstrates *finite men* (**i.e.** "*born*" in time and space) have *nothing* on the *eternal One*

## I. God's Sovereignty Over Creation (Job 38:1-39:30)

### Content

#### d. God questions Job about his role in creating the animal kingdom (38:39-40:30)

1. **now:** God turns his attention to *Day Six* of the Creation Narrative – the establishment of **land animals** (**i.e.** sea creatures and birds [insects?] were formed on *Day Five*; **Genesis 1:20-23**)
  - a. **IMO:** the chapter break should actually be at **38:39**, where this dialogue about animals begins
  - b. however, this "analogy" to the Creation Narrative of **Genesis 1** is not "perfect" (**see below**)
2. **observation #1:** God refers to **ten (10)** different animals – **six (6)** land animals and **four (4)** birds
  - a. **7 to 3** if you consider the ostrich to be more of a land animal than a bird ...
  - b. **i.e.** God uses *all forms* of creature that **inhabit dry land** (where men are!), including birds
    1. and, he uses both *wild* animals (lions) and *domesticable* animals (horses) as examples
  - c. **his point:** to demonstrate that, *even in the animal kingdom*, over which humanity has been given "*dominion*" (**Genesis 1:28**), there is still much Job does not know (or understand) about **the relationship of animals to human beings**
  - d. **IOW:** even as a creature bound to the earth *with the animals* (but not as one of them), and having the power to *domesticate* them (as needed), much of the animal world *still eludes* mankind
    1. **reason:** the *fear* of man placed into animals by God *after the Flood* (**Genesis 9:2**) – probably a form of *self-protection* against man in consuming them as food
    2. thus, this fear leaves much of animal life as *mysterious* to us – animals *naturally* hide from us
3. **observation #2:** the various *living-realities* of these animals is based (largely!) on **instinct**
  - a. instinct: the *ingrained* (not taught!) ability to survive; *genetic* makeup *through which* they can find food, avoid predators, and reproduce their species (**i.e.** "*according to its kind*", **Genesis 1:21, 24**)
    1. **true:** many animals "learn" through their parents, but not in the *human way* (**i.e.** through rational thought against experience) – animal parents "teach" their young to use their *instincts* well
  - b. however, God chose to give *human beings* (in the *Imago Dei*) the ability to *learn* (in the true *intellectual* sense) and *not* have to rely on instinct
    1. **true:** humans do possess some "rudimentary" forms of instinct (**e.g.** self-preservation), but we do not *instinctively* search for food, avoid predators, or reproduce (all of which we can *rationally* bypass to **e.g.** grow our own food, fast, put ourselves in danger, choose [not] to reproduce)

- c. thus ... very often, the “mysteriousness” of animals is in *their instinctual behavior* – since they operate *on a very different level than man*, their behaviors often are “beyond” our understanding
4. **read 38:39-41:** do you know, O Job, how to provide the lion and the raven with their food?
- a. **observation:** neither animal can truly be *domesticated*, such that they rely on *man* for their food
1. both creatures seek out their food (instinctively), and this is *mysterious* to us (in many ways)
  2. **e.g.** in the realities of this world, animals spend *most* of their time hunting for food, yet much still eludes us as to the *complexities* of the food chain (**i.e.** we have a tendency to “mess it up!”)
- b. **God: O Job, can you get the lion or the raven (or any wild animal, really) what they need to survive; do you have the ability to hunt for the lion; do you possess his instinctive “wits”?**
1. **IOW:** you can barely keep your own food supply; how can you *dare* to question me, the One who provides food for you *from every kind of animal* (**note v. 41**)
5. **read 39:1-4, 5-6:** do you know, O Job, how the mountain goats and deer reproduce, or where the wild donkeys roam with their young?
- a. **observation:** like the seeking of food, the methods of reproduction in the animal kingdom, and the places where animals live and raise their young is largely mysterious to humans
1. **e.g.** the Emperor Penguin, incubating and raising young on the ice sheet in Antarctica – this seems like the *least likely way* for a species to survive (**i.e.** from an *evolutionary* perspective)
  2. yet ... reproduction is one of the most *significant time-activities* of animals (unlike humans!)
    - a. **true:** humans do possess some “innate” desire to bear children, but the “need” to reproduce is not an instinctual “drive” within us as it is with animals (**again:** note **Genesis 1:21, 24**)
- b. **God: O Job, do you truly understand how the mountain goat or deer reproduce; can you explain why the animals of the world live and breed where they do?**
1. **IOW:** you can barely keep a line of *domesticated* animals going; how can you question the One who keeps *all the animals of the world* reproducing after their own kind, in service to you?
6. **read 39:9-11, 13-18:** can you, O Job, domesticate the wild ox or the ostrich?
- a. **observation:** the idiom “dumb as an ox” traces its lineage to the perception of a large, slow, lumbering animal being “less intelligent” (oxen are quite smart; **e.g. Thomas Aquinas, 13<sup>th</sup> C.**)
1. **ITC:** the wild ox (unlike domesticated oxen) is pictured as a *brutish* animal, one that *cannot* be trained to serve a master (**i.e.** its great strength *precludes* its training for farming)
  2. additionally, the ostrich is *well-known* for being intellectually “slow”, yet physically *fast*
    - a. **vv. 14-16:** she buries her eggs in the sand, but does not protect them there, because ...
    - b. **v. 17:** God says that he has “*made her forget wisdom*” and have “*no share in understanding*”
    - c. yet, **v. 18:** God notes that she can *outrun* a horse – her *physical* strength allows her to run at speeds *averaging 43 mph* (**i.e.** horses can attain speeds of **~30 mph**)
  3. **IOW:** God notes two animals who “appear” dumb, yet are *beyond the ability of human beings to truly domesticate* – they remain “unusable” (mostly!) to us *except as food*
    - a. **true:** ostriches are *widely farmed* all over the world, but they cannot be “trained” to help with the production of food itself (**e.g.** ostrich meat is delicious!)
- b. **God: O Job, can you train wild oxen or ostriches to serve you; can you change their lack of intelligence and use it to your benefit?**
1. **IOW:** you struggle with the animals I have *granted* to you for domestication (**e.g.** horses; **see next**); how can you question the One who has purposed *every animal*, smart or dumb, for you?
7. **read 39:19-25:** have you, O Job, given the horse great strength, and the ability to serve without fear?
- a. **observation:** the picture God paints of the horse is of an animal **who is not afraid of war**
1. “*he goes out to meet the weapons*” (**v. 21**; **i.e.** he carries the soldier into battle)
  2. “*he does not turn back from the sword*” (**v. 22**; **i.e.** he is not afraid of the weapons being brought to bear against the soldier that he carries)
  3. “*upon him rattle the quiver, the flashing spear, and the javelin*” (**v. 23**; **i.e.** he carries the weapons for the riding soldier without fear)
  4. “*he cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet*” (**vv. 24-25**; **i.e.** he is willing to charge even into battle at the command of his rider)
  5. **IOW:** the horse is a *uniquely gifted* domesticable animal – a *true servant* of humans, even in the face of that which threatens to kill him (and his rider!)
    - a. an animal that can be trained to run *into* a battle, rather than to flee as if from danger – to put *himself* in harm’s way in order to protect his *human* owner
    - b. an *unparalleled* animal in the service of mankind – domesticated since the Fourth Millennium B.C. for farming, transportation, cattle-ranching, and sports (**Job probably had some?**)
    - c. in the OT, a measure of status and wealth (**e.g.** Solomon: 40,000; **1 Kings 4:26**)
    - d. today, a unit of *strength* for modern technology (**i.e.** horsepower)

- b. **God: O Job, have you given the horse his great strength, or his very *unique* ability to serve man; do you understand this animal, willing to run into mortal danger on your behalf?**
  - 1. **IOW:** you don't understand the uniqueness of the horse, how can you question the One who made this magnificent animal *as your servant*?
- 8. **read 39:26-29:** do the *hawk* and the *eagle* answer to you, O Job, do they care about what you do?
  - a. **observation:** God ends his rapid-fire questions of Job by turning to two (2) *birds* (i.e. in a very different way than his observations of the ostrich above)
    - 1. **ITC:** two *birds of prey* – highly specialized carnivores that use *height* as both a living space and as a tool for hunting prey (i.e. creatures that can fly)
    - 2. possessing an ability *unknown* amongst humans – yet, existing in birds, insects, some mammals, and (even!) angels (i.e. angelic “flight” as locomotion in the *spiritual* realm)
      - a. i.e. a creature possessing a nature of which human beings are often *jealous* (*dreams?*)
  - b. **God: O Job, do you understand what it means to fly; are you jealous of the animal that I formed below you, because of his ability, which you do not possess?**
    - 1. **IOW:** since you have no idea what it means to use the atmosphere to move around from place to place, how can you question the One who gave this creature such an ability, *yet considers you infinitely more important than him* (**Matthew 6:25f**)  
“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”
- 9. **reality:** God has established the animal kingdom as a *fierce* and *difficult* realm, one that we (as humans) do *not* have to navigate
  - a. **best described as: eat or be eaten** – the constant *instinctual* struggle to find food, keep from *becoming* food, and reproducing your kind against the overwhelming odds of success
  - b. a world we, as those at the “top” of the food chain, do not struggle with or against – the Creator has given us a very different kind of world, one that is *significantly easier* (and more fulfilling!)
    - 1. **e.g.** none of us need worry about being carried off by a giant bird to his nest (**sci-fi**)
    - 2. our day-to-day problems are *nowhere near* as difficult as those experienced *every minute* by animals – our lives are *not* (typically!) about *how to survive*
    - 3. **true:** *sometimes* we struggle with matters of life-and-death (in a fallen, sinful world)
      - a. but ... *most* of human life grants us the opportunity to ponder *greater things* than just where our next meal is coming from (**e.g.** Job sitting and talking with his friends)
  - c. **in the end:** we stand *exalted* under the ordination of an Almighty God – our lives are not just about *surviving*, but about *thriving in an intimate, personal, relationship with our Creator*