

The Book of Job: Part 3 God's Speeches

Ch. 38:1-40:5 God's First Speech and Job's Reply: A Survey of God's Creation

Introduction	38:1
Challenge	38:2-3
Body of speech	
Cosmology/Meteorology	38:4-38
4-7	creation of the earth
8-11	control of the sea
12-15	dawn of day (light/dark)
16-18	abysses--sea, death
19-21	light, darkness
Meteorological phenomena	
22-24	snow/hail/wind—
25-27	rain for desert
28-30	rain, dew, ice
31-33	constellations (perhaps as signs of seasonal rain)
34-38	clouds, rain
Animal World	38:39-39:30
38:39-41	lion cubs/raven fledglings
39:1-4	mountain goats/deer
5-8	onager (wild ass)
9-12	buffalo (wild ox)
13-18	ostrich
19-25	war horse
26-30	hawk/vulture
Demand for reply	40:1-2
Job's reply	40:3-5

Ch.40:6-42:6 God's Second Speech and Job's Reply: Divine Governance

Introduction	40:6
Challenge	40:7-14
Body of speech	
40:15-24	Behemoth
41:1-34	Leviathan
Job's reply	42:1-6

Refer to the excerpts from the two commentaries for insights on the divine speeches.

Consider these questions related to the first divine speech:

What was the purpose of the rhetorical questions regarding God's creation of the world?

What do all these animals, except the war horse, have in common?

Are these animals likely to be part of Job's experience?

What does God hope to convey to Job in this speech?

What do you imagine Job was thinking?

Does this speech answer any of Job's questions?

Consider these questions related to the second divine speech:

What do Behemoth and Leviathan represent in God's creation?

42:1-6 Job's Reply to God's Second Speech (NSRV)

Job answered GOD:

"I'm convinced: You can do anything and everything. Nothing and no one can upset your plans. You asked, 'Who is this muddying the water, ignorantly confusing the issue, second-guessing my purposes?' I admit it. I was the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, made small talk about wonders way over my head. You told me, 'Listen, and let me do the talking. Let me ask the questions. You give the answers.' I admit I once lived by rumors of you; now I have it all firsthand—from my own eyes and ears! I'm sorry—forgive me. I'll never do that again, I promise! I'll never again live on crusts of hearsay, crumbs of rumor."

Had you been Job, what would you have learned?

"Job had earlier been caught in a dilemma. He could attribute the wretchedness of the human condition to only the arbitrariness and perhaps the hostility of God. Now, given what had been disclosed to him in the divine speeches, Job is able to perceive a world in which the vulnerability of human existence can be understood, not in terms of divine enmity,, but in terms of a creation within which the chaotic is restrained but never fully eliminated....His final words signal his appropriation of the vision of reality and the nature of God disclosed in the divine speeches."¹

¹ Carol Newsom, Introduction and Commentary on the Book of Job, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 4, Abingdon Press, 2006, p. 595-632.