

# “The LORD Answered”

## Job 38:1-39:30

We find here the beginning of Jehovah’s answer to Job. What we don’t often see, however, is that He is answering more than just Job. Remember, Job’s three friends were still there, as well as Elihu – they were party to Jehovah’s response for, as it says in verse one, “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind” – all that were there heard His reply.

The answer Job had asked for had finally come – the LORD was now speaking – but, as is the case in our prayer life today, the answer wasn’t exactly what Job expected. The answer may not have been what was expected, but Job did recognize it was the answer. What did happen, as will be seen later, is that the answer had a positive effect on Job, as the answers we received from the Lord in prayer should do.

### Job 31:35

<sup>35</sup> Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.

God answers with some very great and wonderful truths about who He is, and how much greater He is than man. He does this with a series of many questions, asked in a way that needs no answer – in fact, in a way that no answer could be given. We’ll break these down into an outline simply for the sake of our study, but keep in mind that they are all speaking of the same thing – God is far greater than man.

## **I. INTRODUCTION – THE LORD PRESENTS HIMSELF TO JOB – 38:1-3**

**A. Verses one through three are an introduction, of sorts, to not just these two chapters under our review, but for the following two as well (chapters 38-41 together).**

**B. Vs. 1a – “Then the LORD answered Job”**

1. The verse begins, as many do in Hebrew, with a verb followed by its subject and then the object – וַיַּעַן-יְהוָה אֶת-אֱיֹבָב.
2. The somewhat uniqueness here some consider to be in that Job is specifically addressed. In most (but not all) of the discourses prior to this text the portion would read something similar to, “And Bildad answered...,” without naming the person being addressed. The significance here is that it could be one of the others that were there may have started to answer Elihu, but God intervened.

“It is remarked, with reason, that the special mention of Job as the person answered “implies that another speaker had intervened” (Wordsworth)... (as found in Pulpit Commentary).

**C. Vs. 1b – “Out of the whirlwind” - מִן הַסְּעָרָה**

1. “Out of” – indicating a place of location – God was in the whirlwind itself, speaking to Job.
2. Although the word for “whirlwind” here is not the same as was found in the previous chapter (37:9) – “out of the south cometh

the whirlwind” (סִיּוֹף) – the use of the definite article would point to a storm that was already on Job’s mind, one that was previously mentioned, and that could only be in the previous chapter. The word used here is a bit more descriptive of the storm than the one in the previous chapter – Dr. Strong has this defined as a hurricane.

3. The use of the “whirlwind” by the LORD seems to be clearly connected with the previous text that Elihu gave as describing the might of the LORD. Some seem to think that there was actually an approaching storm that was used to visually enhance the descriptions given.

“The tempest; the storm - probably that which Elihu had seen approaching, Job 37:21-24. God is often represented as speaking to people in this manner. He spake amidst lightnings and tempests on Mount Sinai Exo. 19:16-19, and he is frequently represented as appearing amidst the thunders and lightnings of a tempest, as a symbol of his majesty; compare Psa. 18:9-13; Hab. 3:3-6.” (Barnes)

***D. Vs. 2 finds the first question asked by the LORD – in fact it is the first thing said by Him to Job, or to the others with him.***

1. מִי זֶה – “Who is this” – the verse begins with a interrogative (a question) and a pronoun. When this combination is used, the pronoun used here is quite often used like an adverb – “Who then” – “It is

attached enclitically [a word closely connected with the preceding word], almost as an adv., to certain words, esp. interrog. pronouns, to impart, in a manner often not reproducible in Engl. idiom, directness and force, bringing the question or statement made into close relation with the speaker" (B-D-B).

2. "That darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge"

- a) "That" – who – "darkeneth" – these two words are verb participle – מְהַשְׁכֵּחַ – this is being used figuratively and carries the idea of darkening by obscuring or confusing counsel given.

"Which by seeking out the secret counsel of God by man's reason, makes it more obscure, and shows his own folly." (Geneva Bible notes)

Going back to the previous verse, and the indication given that someone began speaking and the LORD interrupted him, we see that point again in the use of the participle here. "[F]avours the assumption that Job has uttered such words immediately before, and is interrupted by Jehovah, without an intervening speaker having come forward" (B-D-B).

- b) "Counsel" – מַצָּחָה – advice, plan – "God's counsel. For the great matter of the dispute between Job and his friends, was concerning God's counsel and providence in afflicting Job; which Job had endeavoured to obscure and misrepresent. This first word which God spoke, struck Job

to the heart. This he repeats and echoes to, Job 42:3, as the arrow that stuck fast in him" (Wesley).

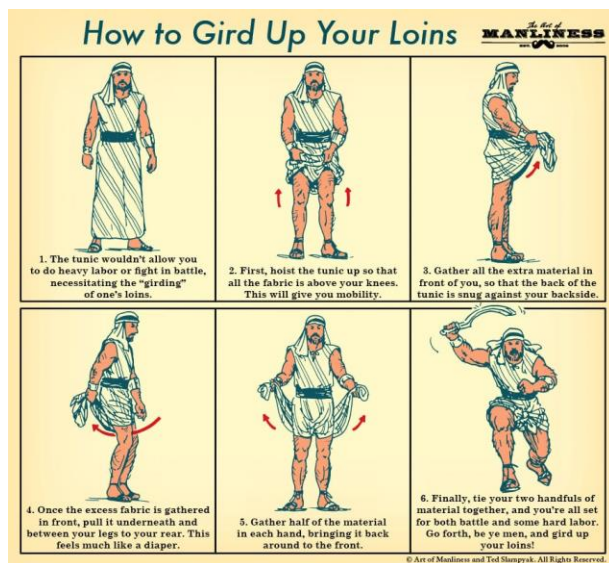
- c) "By words without knowledge" – trying to defeat the counsel of God with the empty words of man's languages, with man's knowledge, is, at best, foolish, and in its essence, an affront to the divine will of the Almighty.

"Who, where, is he that darkens counsel thus by words without knowledge? Let him show his face if he dare, and stand to what he has said." Note, Darkening the counsels of God's wisdom with our folly is a great affront and provocation to God. Concerning God's counsels we must own that we are without knowledge. They are a deep which we cannot fathom; we are quite out of our element, out of our aim, when we pretend to account for them. Yet we are too apt to talk of them as if we understood them, with a great deal of niceness and boldness; but, alas! we do but darken them, instead of explaining them. We confound and perplex ourselves and one another when we dispute of the order of God's decrees, and the designs, and reasons, and methods, of his operations of providence and grace. A humble faith and sincere obedience shall see further and better into the secret of the Lord than all the philosophy of the schools, and the searches of science, so called. This first word which God spoke is the more observable because Job, in his repentance, fastens upon it as that which silenced and humbled him, Job 42:3." (Matthew Henry)

***E. Vs. 3 is a very dramatic verse and sets the tone for what is to come. In essence, God is saying to Job, "If you're so smart,***

***if you're so good, if you think you know all that is knowable, then stand up like a man and lets debate the issue." In a simpler way, "Man up."***

1. "Gird up now thy loins like a man"
  - a) "Gird up now" – equip yourself, clothe yourself for battle, prepare yourself
  - b) "Thy loins"



- c) "Like a man" – the word for man (גִּבּוֹר) is one that means strong man, warrior, emphasizing strength or ability to fight (B-D-B). Get ready for battle.
2. "For I will demand of thee" – I will question you – the word used (אָפַשׁ) is one that can mean simply to ask, but, within the context, can seen as a stern demand (which is the case here). The next clause

shows this – the use of the volitional form of this verb is to require an action, hence its translation, “I will demand.”

3. “And answer thou me” – cause me to know

- a) The root of the verb here –  $\text{יָדַע}$  – is one that, in its base meaning, means to know, to learn. The stem used (Hiphil) puts the meaning as causative. The LORD is telling Job that, when the time comes for him to answer, He wanted him to “cause me to know your answer – cause me to know your reasoning.”
- b) This is not suggestive, and although the many questions to follow are to be seen as rhetorical in nature, the LORD expected Job to reply – He really did want an answer. For us today, there are times that the Lord will require of us an answer as well. It wasn’t in Job’s time, and it’s not today, that God doesn’t know the answer – the point is for us to formulate an answer and contemplate the consequence (or result) of the answer.

Conclusion to this point: When we are faced with trials in life – even severe trials – how do we respond? That is really the underlying point to be made here. There is a right way to respond, and Job seemed to falter some in his response. The questions about to be asked were to get him to refocus on what is both real and important.

## **II. WERE YOU THERE DURING CREATION? – 38:4-15**

**A. *The first question God asks Job (and his friends) was where he was when God created the earth. The question was asked to point to God's greatness and man's "littleness" in comparison – vs. 4-7.***

***Verse seven is the most discussed verse in this text and is one that has been debated down through the ages. The point in question is not what the verse deals with as to creation, but what is meant by the "morning stars," and to a lesser degree, who is meant by the "sons of God."***

1. The question is, does the term "morning stars" refer to literal stars that appear in the morning (Venus is called the morning star today), or is it speaking of the angelic body?
2. There is a basic consensus, based upon the placement of this verse following the point of verse six, is it must be pointing to the angels because the stars weren't created until day four of creation, and verses six is speaking of the very first, foundational portion, of creation (Gen. 1:1).

"This must refer to some intelligent beings who existed before the creation of the visible heavens and earth: and it is supposed that this and the following clause



refer to the same beings; that by the sons of God, and the morning stars, the angelic host is meant; as they are supposed to be first, though perhaps not chief, in the order of creation. For the latter clause the Chaldee has, 'All the troops of angels.' Perhaps their creation may be included in the term heavens, Gen. 1:1: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' These witnessed the progress of the creation; and, when God had finished his work, celebrated his wisdom and power in the highest strains." (Clarke)

3. The term "sons of God" has been seen before in Job chapter 1 and 2 – 1:6; 2:1. There it seems it may have been the fallen angels in reference particularly, but the name still holds true as to the term "sons" – they were "sons" in that they were a created being with the characteristics of the image of God prior to man. In this text the angelic beings are simply declared to be – without regard for good or bad (although it is likely that the good angelic beings are in view).

"[W]ho are the sons of God, not by birth, as Christ, nor by adoption, as saints; but by creation, as Adam, Luke 3:38." (Gill)

[Luke 3:38](#)

<sup>38</sup> Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

4. The second line of this verse (couplet) appears to be using synonymous parallelism where the second line is a

repetition of the first – a “proverbial restatement,” if you would. In other words, the second clause either restates in similar terms, or adds clarification to, the first clause.

a) “The morning stars” = “the sons of God”

b) “Sang together” = “shouted for joy”

***B. The next set of verses points to the power of the water, and the issue of the climate, and again, God asks where they were – vs. 8-11. These verses show that God not only created the world, and all the forces it contains, but He still is in control – nothing happens without His approval.***

Colossians 1:16-17

<sup>16</sup> For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

<sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and by him all things consist [are sustained].

Hebrews 1:3

<sup>3</sup> Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding [maintaining] all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

***C. The third point God makes was the question as to where they were when God created day, and were they there when He caused the “dayspring to know his place” – that is, the dawn “knowing”***

***when to appear around the world when it is supposed to – only God could know that and order that – vs. 12-15. Once again, science can explain it, but it is God that created it.***

***Keil & Delitzsch Commentary:***

1. Vs. 12-13 - The dawn of the morning, spreading out from one point, takes hold of the carpet of the earth as it were by the edges, and shakes off from it the evil-doers, who had laid themselves to rest upon it the night before.
2. Vs. 14 - The earth is the subj. to Job 38:14: the dawn is like the signet-ring, which stamps a definite impress on the earth as the clay, the forms which floated in the darkness of the night become visible and distinguishable.
3. Vs. 15 - The light of the evil-doers is, according to Job 24:17, the darkness of the night, which is for them in connection with their works what the light of day is for other men. The sunrise deprives them, the enemies of light in the true sense (Job 24:13), of this light per antiphrasin [the use of words or phrases in a sense opposite to the usual one], and the carrying out of their evil work, already prepared for, is frustrated.

**III. ARE YOU THERE HOLDING CREATION TOGETHER? – 38:16-30**

**A. God then asks them, not only where they were during creation, but are they there holding it together now? We know the Lord is for it says so in the Bible (refer to verses above).**

**B. In verse 16 we find God asking if they have been to the deepest part of the sea to "search" it out – to see what was there and what needed done.**

**C. In verse 17 He asked them if they have been where death is – we know Jesus was for "He led captivity captive."**

Psalm 68:18

<sup>18</sup> Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

Ephesians 4:8-10

<sup>8</sup> Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

<sup>9</sup> (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

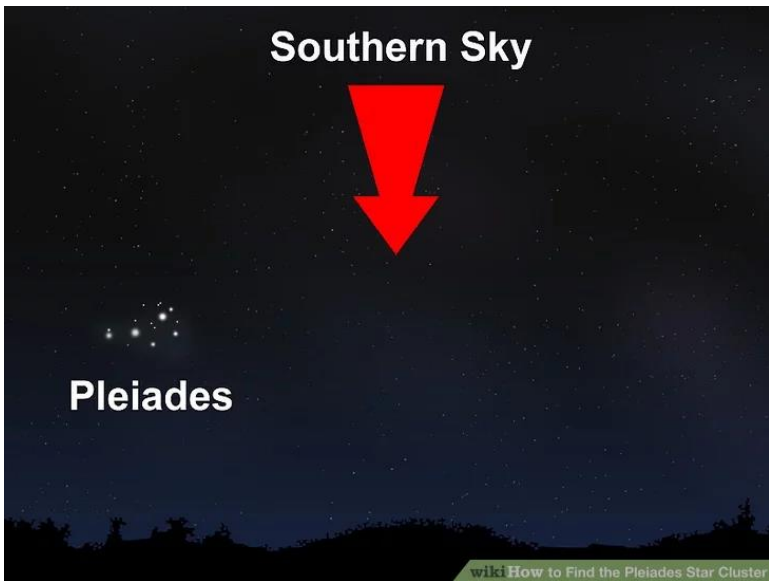
<sup>10</sup> He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

**D. In verses 18-30 God gives a series of questions relating to the weather as to where they were, or if they had been there, to control the elements – again, showing the greatness of God as compared to man.**

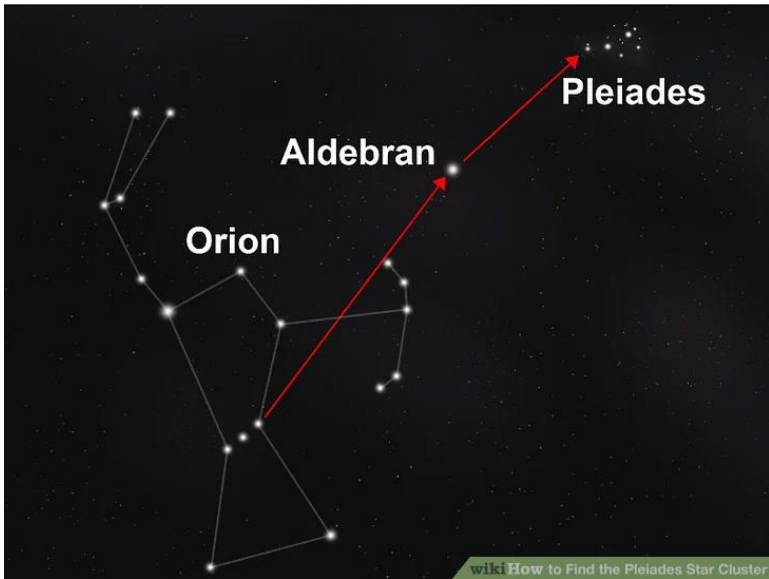
#### **IV. ARE YOU THERE DIRECTING THE HEAVENLY BODIES? – 38:31-35**

**A. Vs. 31-32 gives some of the constellations of stars, showing, for one thing, their historical relevance.**

1. "Sweet influences of Pleiades"
  - a) The idea of the word for "sweet influences" (מַעֲדָנוֹת) is one that refers to bindings, or chains, and is pointing to the bands that tie the Pleiades constellation together. In its use here, "It identifies the feeling created by viewing the Pleiades" (Zodhiates).
  - b) Pleiades is a cluster of seven stars, also known as the "Seven Sisters."



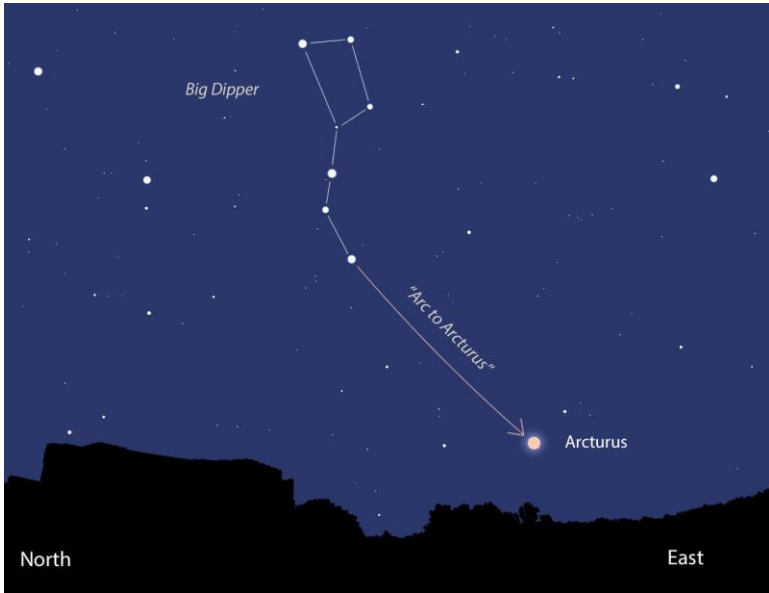
2. "Loose the bands of Orion" – bands (מִשְׁכוֹת) – belt



3. "Bring forth Mazzaroth in his season" – only time in the Bible this is used, and it is a purely Hebrew word, it seems. It is most often understood as the twelve signs of the Zodiac as a whole. "His season" is referencing the fact that there are certain times of the year that the constellations can be seen, depending on where you live.

Mazzaroth (Hebrew Transliteration: מַזְזָרוֹת Mazzārōṯ, LXX Μαζουρωθ, Mazourōth) is a Biblical Hebrew Word found in the Book of Job and literally meaning a Garland of Crowns[1], but its context is that of Astronomical Constellations, and it is often interpreted as a term for the Zodiac or the Constellations thereof.[2] (Job 38:31-32). The similar Word Mazalot (מַזְלוֹת) in 2 Kings 23:3-5 may be related. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazzaroth>)

4. "Guide Arcturus with his sons" – literally, "guide the bear with her sons"



***B. Vs. 33-35 deal with the "ordinances" (laws, statutes) of heaven, or the laws that govern all things weather and climate related.***

Conclusion to this point: These questions all seem to be rhetorical in nature at this point. Some of them God intended to be answered at the beginning, but now He simply asks the questions, knowing that Job and his friends would know the answer – only God can do these things. All of these, for the most part, can be explained scientifically, but just because they can be explained in know way minimizes the God that put them there and holds them there.

As has been said, "What a God we serve!"

## V. ARE YOU IN CREATED LIFE, GIVING IT NATURAL INSTINCTS? – 38:36-39:30

**A. *The first part of created life God refers to here is that of the wisdom of man, and his emotional makeup – vs. 36. There is a wide variety of interpretation on this verse, based on its placement within the context of the heavens. It seems out of place, especially if one interprets it as the KJV translators did, pointing to man.***

1. The word for “inward parts” (טְחוֹת) is only used here and in Psalm 51:6 where it is clearly speaking of man. The word is derived from טוּחַ – a word meaning to cover over, to spread, to besmear, “and is hence given to the veins, because covered with fat” (Barnes).

After all that has been written on the passage, and all the force of the difficulty which is urged, I do not see evidence that we are to depart from the common interpretation, to wit, that God means to appeal to the fact that he has endowed man with intelligence as a proof of his greatness and supremacy. The connection is, indeed, not very apparent. It may be, however, as Noyes suggests, that the reference is to the mind of Job in particular, and to the intelligence with which he was able to perceive, and in some measure to comprehend, these various phenomena. The connection may be something like this: “Look to the heavens, and contemplate these wonders. Explain them, if possible; and then ask who it is that has so endowed the mind of



man that it can trace in them such proofs of the wisdom and power of the Almighty. The phenomena themselves, and the capacity to contemplate them, and to be instructed by them, are alike demonstrations of the supremacy of the Most High.” (Barnes)

2. The word for “heart” here (שֶׁכֶּנִי) is not the normal Hebrew word translated “heart” (לֵב). This one is derived from the verb שָׁכַח – to look at, to view, “and hence, denoting the mind; the intelligent soul” (Gesenius as quoted by Barnes).

***B. The remainder of chapter 38 and all of chapter 39 are given to the natural instincts of the animal kingdom – God is asking Elihu, Job and his friends if they could give to them those instincts***

1. 38:37-38 go back to the point of the heavens and weather-related parts of creation. These two verses are describing an interesting aspect of the effect rain has on clay (and other types of dirt, for that matter) – when it rains, the clay flows like molten metal (the word used for “growth into hardness” is one use to describe how metal flows when heated to the melting point), and then when it dries it hardens back again. God is asking Job and his friends if they had anything to do with that?
2. 38:39-40 – God brings to view the lion and how they hunt for food and provide for the young, and for their “pride.”

3. Vs. 41 deals with the raven, and brings out a truth that even Jesus speaks to – that God provides even for the common birds, and illustrates this when He points out that He even hears the cries of the baby birds that “wander [about] for lack of food.” What a wonderful truth this verse is!! If God will provide for baby birds, why do we not trust Him more?

Psalm 147:9

<sup>9</sup> He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

Matthew 6:26

<sup>26</sup> Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Luke 12:24

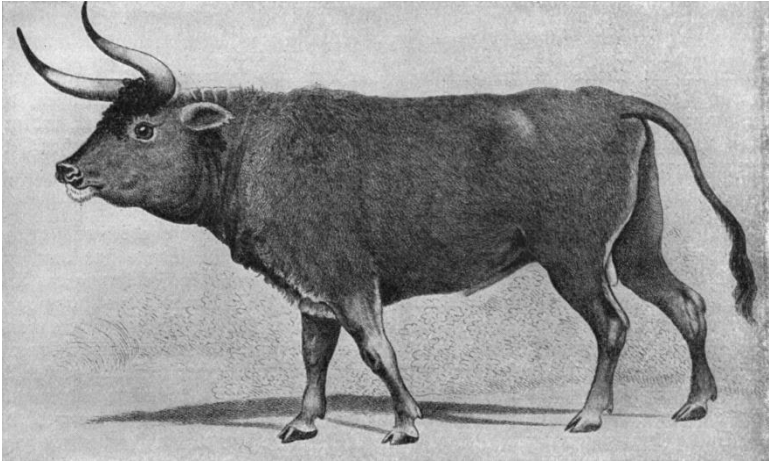
<sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

4. 39:1-4 speaks of the animals of the rocky wilderness in the part of the world where Job lived. “Wild goats of the rock” and “the hinds” (a doe or female deer) are the two mentioned but this can be said of any animal anywhere. These are singled out, in part, because they usually give birth in very secluded areas where no one would be there to observe – except the LORD Himself – and He cares for them.
5. 39:5-8 speaks of wild donkeys (some see this as Zebras but that seems to be stretching it some). The interesting thing

here is the Hebrew has two different words for "wild ass" (donkey). They both speak of the same animal – the best way to describe the difference, it seems, is the first one (פָּרָא) describes its swiftness, while the second one (עֲרוֹד) describes its shyness.

Again, we see how God cares for animal life that only He can see, and He still cares. He provides and He protects ("loosed the bands" – either sets them free from bondage, or more probably, He prevents them from it in the first place).

6. 39:9-12 speaks of the "unicorn." The point of these verses is to show that God has given the great beasts of the earth their power and strength, and He alone can control it.
  - a) What is meant by "unicorn" cannot be determined with absolute certainty. What can be said is that this is not the legendary mystical creature of folklore.
  - b) The Hebrew word (רִיָּם) is one that is used for a wild ox most often in the use of the word in other ancient writings. It is rendered by gifted scholars in various ways – rhinoceros, buffalo, unicorn (the Septuagint has the Greek word μονόκερως for this), the aurochs (a wild bull that are now extinct).



By Charles Hamilton Smith -  
<http://animalpicturesarchive.com/ArchOLD-6/1188058432.jpg>, Public Domain,  
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- c) Whether it is a rhinoceros or a buffalo or a wild ox or some other unknown animal, what is important is that God is the only one that can control it. The description given is one of an untamed and seemingly untamable beast of enormous strength (which is why a rhinoceros seems like a likely candidate here).
7. 39:13-18 speaks of the "peacocks" and the "ostrich." Verse 13 has as "almost as many conjectures as there have been expositors" (Barnes). What is meant in this verse, as with the "unicorn," cannot be known with any amount of certainty. But, as before, what is important here is not necessarily the animal in question but what God does with it and to it to demonstrate His authority in another realm of created beings.

- a) Some versions of the English Bible have verse 13 completely different, which shows the difficulty with the Hebrew in this verse.

ESV - "The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, but are they the pinions and plumage of love?"

ISV - "The wings of the ostrich flap joyously, but aren't its pinions and feathers like the stork?"

MKJV - The wing of the ostrich beats joyously; though not like the stork's pinions for flight.

YLT - The wing of the rattling ones exulteth, Whether the pinion of the ostrich or hawk.

- b) Vs. 14-17 describe the female ostrich in detail and her disregard for her eggs, or her young. Verse 16-17 describe her unnatural attitude toward her young (which, by application, is a lesson for mothers today that have such a disregard for their young that they leave them to their own desires), and how God has control of that – again, showing to Job and his friends how He controls all.
- c) Vs. 18 is describing defensive attitudes for her own well-being.

"She leaves her eggs in danger, but, if she herself be in danger, no creature shall strive more to get out of the way of it than the ostrich, Job 39:18. Then she lifts up her wings on high (the strength of which then stands her in better stead than their beauty), and, with the help of them, runs so fast that a horseman at full speed cannot overtake her: She scorneth the horse and

his rider. Those that are least under the law of natural affection often contend most for the law of self-preservation. Let not the rider be proud of the swiftness of his horse when such an animal as the ostrich shall out-run him." (Henry).

8. Vs. 19-25 speaks of the horse. This is mostly descriptive of the horse when in battle – again, showing that God controls even the horse and its genetic structure to accomplish His will, when needed.
9. Vs. 26-30 speaks of the hawk and eagle – 26 on the hawk and 27-30 on the eagle. Shows the control God has over the birds of prey.

***C. The answer to all these questions is an obvious one – no one other than God Himself could do any of these things.***

Conclusion: We need to remember that God is in control – of everything. No matter what happens in the world, God is in control.