

God Spoke out of the Whirlwind

Who is this that gives counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins now, like a valiant man; for I will question you, and you shall answer me.

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding. Who has laid its measures, if you know? Or who has stretched the line upon it? Upon what are its limits resting? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof? When did I create the morning stars, and all the angels shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with gates, when it broke forth as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment of the earth, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and prescribed limits for it, and set bars and doors, and said, Thus far shall you come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves be stayed? Have you commanded the dawn since your days began; or do you know the place of the morning; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be thrown out of it? So that their bodies shall be turned into clay, and be thrown into a heap. The light of sinners shall be withheld, and the arm of the arrogant shall be broken. Have you entered into the depths of the sea? Or have you walked in the foundations of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the gates of the shadow of death? Have you seen the whole breadth of the earth? Declare to me if you know it all. Where is the dwelling place of light, and where is the place of darkness? Do you know its borders and the path to its house? Do you remember when you were born, and do you know if you will live many days? Have you entered into the chambers of the snow? Or have you seen the storehouses of hail, which are reserved against the time of distress, against the day of battle and war? Or in what manner is light distributed, and whence the wind comes forth upon the earth? Who causes a flash of lightning and a clap of thunder? Who causes it to rain on a land where no man is, in the wilderness where there is no inhabitant, to saturate every thicket, and cause the tender grass to spring up? Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb did the dew and ice come forth? And who begot the hoary frost of heaven? The waters are hardened like a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. Can you stop the movement of the Pleiades, or have you seen the path of Orion? Can you bring forth Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you stand in the paths of Aldebaran? Do you know the laws of the heavens? Or do you make ordinances for the earth? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds? Or can you cover them with abundance of waters? Can you send forth the lightnings, that they may go, and say to you, Here we are? Who has put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who has given vision to understanding? Who has numbered the clouds by his wisdom? And who has raised the pillars of heaven? Who has poured out soil upon the earth, and who has made the steep rocks? Who has given prey for the lion? Or filled the appetite of the young lions? Who has multiplied the beasts in the field? Or who has provided food for the raven? For its young ones cry to God, and faint for lack of food. Do you know the time when wild goats bring forth in the steep rocks? Or can you watch the calving of hinds? Can you number the months that they fulfill, and know the time when they bring forth? And do you know when they kneel and bring forth their young ones? They bring up their young ones, until they grow up and are weaned. Who has left the wild ass to be free, and made him to escape the yoke? For he has made the plain his house, and the salt land his dwelling place. He scorns the multitude of cities, and is not afraid of the voice of rulers. The tops of mountains are his pasture, and he tread over every green thing. Will the unicorn be willing to serve you, or will he spend the night at your crib? Can you bind the yoke on the neck of the unicorn? Or will he harrow in a rugged place? Will you have confidence in him, because his strength is great? Or will you leave your labor to him? Do you trust him, that he will winnow your threshing and gather your grain into the barn? The ostrich rouses herself up haughtily; then she comes and makes her nest; But she leaves her eggs in the earth to be warmed on the ground. And because she has the feet of a bird, forgets that the wild beast may trample them. She multiplies her young ones, though they do not stay with her; although her labor is in vain, she has no fear: God has increased

wisdom, but he has not given her a portion of it. She raises herself high like a palm tree; she laughs at the horse and his rider. Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with armour? Can you make him move like the locust? Or can you make him afraid? He paws in the plain, and rejoices in the valley; he goes forth armed to the battle. He laughs at a pit, and is not frightened; neither does he turn back from the sword. The quiver rattles against him, the glittering spear and the lance. He gallops with rage that makes the ground to tremble, nor does he fear the sound of the trumpet. He makes the sound, Aha, aha; and he smells the battle from afar; he terrifies the officers with his neighing. Is it by your wisdom that the hawk was created and wings his way toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command, and make his nest in steep rocks? He dwells and lodges on the rock, upon the cliff of the precipice. He is sustained by his prey, his eyes behold afar off. His young ones suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is he.

Many are the counsels of God; he who reproves God must answer for it. ...Gird up your loins now like a man; I will question you, and you shall declare to me.

Will you disannul my judgment? Will you even condemn me, that you may be justified? Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like him? Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency; and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast away the rage of your wrath; and look upon everyone that is proud, and abase him; And cast the sinners into their place. Bury them in the earth together; cover their faces with fine dust. Then will I also give you credit when your own right hand has saved you. Behold now the hippopotamus which I made for you; he eats grass like an ox. Lo, his strength is in his loins, and his tail stands erect like a cedar tree. The sinews of his thighs bulge out. His bones are strong as pieces of brass; yea, they are like bars of iron. He is the chief among God's creations; for he made him powerful to fight. He roams about the mountains, and all the wild beasts of the field lie down under his protection. He lurks in the covert of reeds, he couches as a lion. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook encircle him. Behold, if he plunges into the river, he is not afraid; he is confident, though the Jordan reaches to his mouth. Can one take him with a hook, or catch him with a net? Can one snare him in a trap, or can one bind his tongue with a rope? Can you catch the Leviathan with a hook? Or draw him out with a cord in his mouth? Can you put a bridle in his mouth? Or bore his jaw with a thorn? Will he make many supplications to you? Or will he speak flattering words to you? Will he make a covenant with you? Or will you count him as a servant for ever? Will you play with him as with a bird? Or will you keep him as a pet for your children? Shall fishermen gather over him? Shall they divide him among many people? Can you fill his skin with meat? Or bake his head with fire? Try to capture him; such a battle you will have! You will never forget it. Behold, Job, you now are set free from your afflictions. So your God will also remove your bitterness. One cannot go far off when Leviathan is stirred up; but who then is able to stand before me? Who has pre-eminence over me, so that I should surrender? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine. I will not keep silence because of his power, and the might of his sinews. Who has removed his skin? Who can come near him when the net is lowered? Who can open the doors of his mouth? His teeth are terrible round about. His mouth is tied up, and closely shut, as with a seal. His teeth are so close together that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together so that they cannot be separated. His appearance is full of light, and his eyes are like rays of the dawn. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goes smoke, like a flame spreading round the sides of a pot. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth. He has great strength in his neck, and fear is to him like dancing. His meat is good and fat, and it is nourishing. His heart is never made to quake for fear, but is firm like a stone; yea as hard as flint. Because of the fear of him, the mighty are afraid; and the strong are humbled. The wound of the sword is of no effect; the lances of the mighty he removes. He considers iron like straw, and brass like rotten wood. The bow cannot make him flee; he treats slingstones as stubble. He laughs at the

spear; he is at home in the deep as if he were on the dry land. With his strong body he walks upon the ground. He brings to destruction whatever is proud. He is a king over all things in the deep.