

God's Care For Creatures

Job 39:1-30

Introduction

The Lord will humble Job with a series of questions; the first questions about creation; the earth, the oceans, the light; snow and rain and the stars! Then the Lord continues with a series of questions about God's creatures; lions (39:39-30); ravens (38:41) and in this chapter the Lord will draw attention to the mountain goats (vv.1-4); the wild donkeys (vv.5-8); the wild ox (vv.9-12); the ostrich (vv.13-18); the horse (vv.19-25); and the hawk (vv.26-30).

Do you have any idea when mountain goats and deer are born? (vv.1-4) Did you loose the wild donkey and care for each one (vv.5-8)? Do you control the wild ox or does he obey you (vv.9-12)? Did you give the ostrich it's keen intelligence (or the lack thereof)—or the war horse its unique set of skills in order to function in battle or the hawk and eagle its eye sight?

Why in the world is God asking Job these questions? The Lord invites Job to consider the mysteries of the animal kingdom—in part to reveal Job's ignorance and therefore demonstrate Job's inability to serve as God's judge or even question His will and wisdom. And in the questions God reveals His deep care for His creatures. The Bible teaches that God is the Creator and the animal kingdom was designed by God and that God cares for His creatures.

In his commentary on the book of Job David L. McKenna comments on the verbal pictures that God draws for the animals He loves; “. . .the unpredictability of the birthing and development of goats and deer (39:1-4); the *freedom* of the foraging donkey and onager (vv.5-8); the *stubbornness* of the working ox (vv.9-12); the *foolishness* of the speeding ostrich (vv.13-18); the *courage* of the warring horse (vv. 19-25); the *wisdom* of the migrating hawk (v.26); and the *perspective* of the high-nesting eagle (vv. 27-30)”. McKenna continues “Note that with each animal in God's menagerie is not only unique in itself, but within each animal are complimentary gifts and flaws, graces and faults, charms and handicaps” (p. 292).

How interesting. We share some things in common with our furry and feathered friends.

The Mountain Goats (vv.1-4)

Job 39:1–30 (NKJV) 1 “Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats bear young? Or can you mark when the deer gives birth?

Most of us know the gestation period of a human baby is nine months. But did Job know the gestation of the wild mountain goats; their instincts and their habits? Why ask this question? When are human beings most vulnerable? When they are first born.

The Lord takes care of mountain goats and deer when they are vulnerable. The cynic responds; ‘yes—but sometimes wild mountain goats lose their young to predators; and deer lose their young to predators; and babies sometimes die.’ It is true—the Lord provides order and balance in nature—and in the supernatural circumstances of this thing called our lives.

What is the Lord suggesting? If I can establish the times when these babies need nurture and protection—surely I can nurture and protect you.

2Can you number the months that they fulfill? Or do you know the time when they bear young?

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The Lord numbers their days—and our days!

3They bow down, They bring forth their young, They deliver their offspring.

4Their young ones are healthy, They grow strong with grain; They depart and do not return to them.

The word translated 'grain' can also mean 'in the open field'. They manage to survive. They grow strong and embark on a life of independent living. The Lord reminds Job that God knows just how long they need to be nurtured before they can embark on a life of their own.

No wonder in the book of Proverbs (3:5-6) we read; "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; (6) In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."

The Wild Donkeys (vv.5-8)

5"Who set the wild donkey free? Who loosed the bonds of the onager,

The wild donkey is fleet of foot and graceful (The Ryrie Study Bible; see note Job 39:5; p.804). Sometimes the wild donkey was a symbol of the exploited poor (see Job 24:5)

Does the Lord really think some were 'born to be wild'?

6Whose home I have made the wilderness, And the barren land his dwelling?

The Lord allows it to dwell in the wilderness.

7He scorns the tumult of the city; He does not heed the shouts of the driver.

The wild donkey does not have to worry about the hustle and bustle of city life or the shouts of the driver—that is slave driver! The wild donkey hates the noise of the big city;

Job complained about the voice of the oppressor (3:18).

And yet true freedom is being content in the place where God has placed us (Phil. 4:10-12). "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. (11) Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content; (12) I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." (v.13) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

8The range of the mountains is his pasture, And he searches after every green thing.

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The wild donkey is free to forage the hills for food and the Lord intimates that the Lord—makes sure the donkey will find its necessary food! The point?

If God can deliver the wild donkey—can the Lord deliver you? If the Lord allows the wild donkey to forage and find food—won't he make a way for you? Doesn't it make sense to place your confidence and your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Wild Ox (vv.9-12)

9“Will the wild ox be willing to serve you? Will he bed by your manger?”

Certain animals accept domestication and others resist. The wild ox rejects a life of service and burden bearing!

10Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes? Or will he plow the valleys behind you?

Can you hitch it to a plow and force it to plow your fields?

11Will you trust him because his strength is great? Or will you leave your labor to him?

Can you force it to do your heavy labor?

12Will you trust him to bring home your grain, And gather it to your threshing floor?

If you do domesticate the wild ox—do you still trust it to pull the carts of grain from your fields?

What is the Lord saying? Job you can't tame the wild donkey or the wild ox. But I can. Job why continue to act wild? Why do you bray and buck against me? The Lord alone can tame and set free. If I know what I am doing with the donkey and the Ox—I certainly know what to do with you. The questions invite confidence—in the Lord. Peter said, (1 Peter 4:19) “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator”.

God is a faithful Creator!

The Ostrich (vv.13-18)

13“The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, But are her wings and pinions like the kindly stork's?”

Why does the Lord bring up this ‘big bird’? There was a time when the Ostrich was native to the Middle East. Do you remember Job 30:29; “I am the brother of jackals, and a companion of

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Ostriches". Job identified with the jackals and ostriches—in the sense that his cries and wails were like the jackal and ostrich). Job said—in a sense—I feel like I have a lot in common with the Ostrich. The Lord says—well Job—you do have something in common with the “Big Bird”.

The Ostrich has wings—but can't fly! It builds no nest in the trees—but rather on the ground! But the Ostrich doesn't seem to care whether the eggs get crushed or trampled!

What do you have in common with this bird?

What might that be? You are both deficient in knowledge (v.17); both the Ostrich and Job were laughed at because of their appearance (Job 30:1); both experienced misfortune (vv.14-16); the difference of course—the ostrich doesn't seem to be concerned—but Job is concerned.

14For she leaves her eggs on the ground, And warms them in the dust;

15She forgets that a foot may crush them, Or that a wild beast may break them.

16She treats her young harshly, as though they were not hers; Her labor is in vain, without concern,

17Because God deprived her of wisdom, And did not endow her with understanding.

In some ways the Ostrich seems to act foolishly; exposing her young to what looks like unnecessary risks. Again Ryrie; “Her seeming lack of wisdom is not apart from God's plan, just as behind the trials of the godly, which seem so unreasonable to Job, lies the wise purposes of God” (note Ryrie Study Bible p. 804).

What an interesting thought: behind the trials of the godly (which seem so unreasonable to Job) lies the wise purpose of God.”

We so want an explanation! Or at least a glimpse at the ‘wise purpose of God’.

How is it that the Ostrich without the ability to fly can run so fast? Why does the maternal instinct seem so far from the female Ostrich?

18When she lifts herself on high, She scorns the horse and its rider.

Why does she scorn the horse and its rider? Because she can still out run those who are seek to run her down!

The Lord invites Job to consider this odd bird! Job doesn't it make you laugh? Could you have dreamed up such a bird? God limited its wisdom—but it can still outrun the horse! God grants wisdom! God withholds wisdom! Think before you speak. Who is the one who possesses true wisdom? “For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be

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compared to it" (Prov.8:11). If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally and upbraideth (doesn't hold out) not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5).

The Horse (vv.19-25)

19 "Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder?"

Consider the horse. Did you create the horse or give it strength or a flowing mane?

20 Can you frighten him like a locust? His majestic snorting strikes terror.

21 He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He gallops into the clash of arms.

22 He mocks at fear, and is not frightened; Nor does he turn back from the sword.

23 The quiver rattles against him, The glittering spear and javelin.

24 He devours the distance with fierceness and rage; Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet has sounded.

25 At the blast of the trumpet he says, 'Aha!' He smells the battle from afar, The thunder of captains and shouting.

The horse can leap like a locust; snort and strike terror; the horse is fearless—afraid of nothing; not sword or arrow or spear or lance. The horse can charge into battle!

This week I read the story of Sgt. Reckless: She was called America's "War Horse".

- In battle, Reckless made 51 trips —on her own — through 35 miles of combat zone to transport nearly five tons of explosives.
- Reckless was promoted to Staff Sergeant in 1954, making her the only animal to ever hold any legal, officially sanctioned U.S. military rank
- Robin Hutton single-handedly spearheaded efforts to raise a monument in honor of Sgt. Reckless at the National Museum of the Marine Corps' Semper Fidelis Park in Quantico, VA. A second monument will be dedicated later this fall at Camp Pendleton, CA
- Life Magazine once honored Sgt. Reckless in a special "Celebrating our Heroes" edition alongside George Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Teresa
- Reckless earned two Purple Hearts, along with many other military decorations, for her valor
- She was "one of the guys," often eating pancakes and bacon with the guys in the mess hall and sleeping in their tents.

Reckless's baptism under fire came at a place called Hedy's Crotch, near the villages of Changdan and Kwakchan.[21] Though loaded down with six recoilless rifle shells, she initially "went straight up" and all four feet left the ground the first time the recoilless rifle was fired. When she landed she started shaking, but Coleman, her handler, calmed her down. The second time the gun fired she merely snorted, and by the end of the mission that day appeared calm and

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was seen trying to eat a discarded helmet liner.[3] She even appeared to take an interest in the operation of the weapon.[21] When learning a new delivery route, Reckless would only need someone to lead her a few times. Afterwards she would make the trips on her own.[22] Her most significant accomplishment came during the Battle of Panmunjom-Vegas (also known as the Battle of Outpost Vegas/Vegas Hill) over the period March 26–28, 1953, when she made 51 solo trips in a single day, carrying a total of 386 recoilless rounds (over 9,000 pounds, carrying 4 to 8 24-pound shells on each trip) covering over 35 miles that day. The whole Battle of Vegas lasted 3 days.[2][3][16][23][b] She was wounded twice during the battle: once when she was hit by shrapnel over the left eye and another time on her left flank.[8] There was a standing order not to ride Reckless, but during the Battle of Vegas Hill someone violated that order and took Reckless on a "joy ride" that included a sprint through a minefield. She was not injured during the unauthorized ride.[24] For her accomplishments during the Battle of Vegas Hill, Reckless was promoted to corporal.[25] (WIKI Entry online).

Job could you design a horse? Think about the elegant combination of qualities; raw power, endless energy, endurance, beauty, and grace! Think—ready and eager for battle, who chooses the place to fight and who will ride! The Lord—sets the course of battle and history.

Job doesn't it make sense to fear and reverence the Lord! The Psalmist says; "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him" (Psalm 33:8). "But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab.2:20).

The Hawk (vv.26-30)

26 "Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, And spread its wings toward the south?"

Why south? We know birds fly south for the winter.

27 Does the eagle mount up at your command, And make its nest on high?"

Who taught the eagle to fly or build its nest high up? Who designed these magnificent animals?

28 On the rock it dwells and resides, On the crag of the rock and the stronghold.

29 From there it spies out the prey; Its eyes observe from afar.

30 Its young ones suck up blood; And where the slain are, there it is."

Does Job speak of the eagle or the vulture?

Whether eagle or vulture why does God allow carrion birds to 'suck up blood'? Clearly the birds consuming the carcasses of the dead prevent the spread of disease.

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For the person who says; "God why do you allow evil?"

The Bible teaches that God limits evil!

The Lord invites Job to consider—can he fly like the eagle or see like the eagle? And yet God sees everything—and sits infinitely higher than any bird of prey? Who has God's perspective? The Lord sees Job's pain and suffering! The hawk trusts its instinct to fly to the place of safety and warmth and protection. The eagle trusts its instinct to build its nest high on the rocky crags or cliffs.

What does heart tell you? Why wouldn't you fly to Jesus? Why won't you build your life on Jesus? Why do you keep resisting, why do you refuse to trust the Lord?

Conclusion

Why does God ask questions? Why not just give us answers?

With facts we don't always need faith! Are you suggesting ignorance is superior to understanding? No I am suggesting that without faith it is impossible to please God. Think about what Job is going through. Job is suffering. McKenna calls this "the no-man's land" between known facts and his unknown future. By demanding that God answer his question *why*, he assumed that God owes him the facts to explain his affliction and defend divine justice. Inadvertently, Job has started on the path that leads to humanism, agnosticism, and atheism. Nietzsche, the atheist said, "He who knows the *why* can bear with any *how!*".

McKenna: Why is the question for which Satan promised the answer to Eve in the Garden. To her, he said, "You will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen.3:5). As the Intermediate Adam, Job is tempted with the same question. Throughout his contest with his friends and his God, he demands answers to the question why. In his own way, he feels that his innocence has earned him the right to be as wise as God, knowing good and evil" (see McKenna pp. 292-293).

Interesting McKenna suggests that when Job asks the why questions—God answers with *who—only out of mysteries beyond human comprehension comes trust in who*" (see p. 293 McKenna).

Who will you trust?