

# CHAPTER 38

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB 38

In this chapter the Lord takes up the controversy with Job; calls upon him to prepare to engage with him in it, and demands an answer to posing questions he puts to him, concerning the earth and the fabric of it, (<sup><1830></sup>Job 38:1-7); concerning the sea, compared to an infant in embryo, at its birth, in its swaddling bands and cradle, (<sup><1838></sup>Job 38:8-11); concerning the morning light, its spread and influence, (<sup><1842></sup>Job 38:12-15); concerning the springs of the sea, the dark parts of the earth, the place both of light and darkness, (<sup><1836></sup>Job 38:16-21); concerning the various meteors, snow, hail, rain, thunder, lightning, and the influences of the stars, (<sup><1842></sup>Job 38:22-38); and concerning provision for lions and ravens, (<sup><1840></sup>Job 38:40,41).

**Ver. 1.** *Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind*, etc.] As soon as Elihu had done speaking, who saw the tempest rising, and gave hints of it, (<sup><1830></sup>Job 37:2,14); and hastened to finish his discourse. This was raised to give notice of the Lord being about to appear, and to display his majesty, and to command reverence and attention. The Targum calls it the whirlwind of distress, as it might be to Job; and a representation of the distressed and disturbed state and condition in which he was. The person that spoke out of it is Jehovah the Son of God, the eternal Word, who very probably appeared in an human form; there was an object seen, (<sup><1845></sup>Job 42:5); and spoke with an articulate voice to Job;

*and said*; in answer to his frequent wishes and desires that the Lord would appear and take his cause in hand.

**Ver. 2.** *Who [is] this*, etc.] Meaning not Elihu the last speaker, as some think; and there are some who suppose not only that these words are directed to him, but all that is said in this and the following chapter: but it was Job the Lord spoke to and answered, as expressed in (<sup><1830></sup>Job 38:1); and these words are taken by Job to himself, (<sup><1845></sup>Job 42:3). Concerning whom the Lord inquires, not as ignorant of him, who he was; but wondering that such a man as he should talk as he did; and as angry with him, and rebuking him for it;

*that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* either his own counsel, his sense and sentiments of things, which were delivered in such an obscure manner as not to be intelligible by those that heard them; whereby they were led, as Job's friends were, into some mistaken notions of him: or rather the counsel of God, his works of providence, which are done according to the counsel of his will, and were misrepresented by Job, as not being wise and good, just and equitable; (see <sup><834B></sup>Job 34:3,5,37).

**Ver. 3.** *Gird up now thy loins like a man*, etc.] Like a man of valour that girds on his harness for battle: Job is bid to prepare for the controversy the Lord was entering into with him; and bring forth his strong reasons and most powerful arguments in his own defence. The allusion is to the custom in the eastern countries, where they wore long garments, to gird them about their loins, when they engaged in work or war. Job had blustered what he would do, and now he is dared to it; (see <sup><820B></sup>Job 23:4-6 31:37);

*for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me*; put questions to him, to which he required a direct and positive answer. Jehovah takes the part of the opponent in this dispute, and gives that of the respondent to Job; since Job himself had put it to his option which to take, (<sup><8132></sup>Job 13:22).

**Ver. 4.** *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?* etc.] The earth has foundations, and such firm ones that it cannot be moved; but what are they, since it is hung in the air on nothing! No other than the power and will of God, who laid these foundations, and the Son of God, who has created and upholds all things by the word of his power, (<sup><800B></sup>Hebrews 1:3,10). Where was Job then? In a state of nothingness, a mere nonentity: he was not present when this amazing work of nature was done, and saw not how the Lord went about it; and yet takes upon him to dive into the secret works and ways of Providence, for which he is rebuked by this question and the following;

*declare, if thou hast understanding*: Job had the understanding of a man in things natural and civil, and of a good man in things spiritual and divine; but he had no understanding of this, of what he is questioned about; could not declare in what place he was, and where he stood, when the earth was founded.

**Ver. 5.** *Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?* etc.] Did God or a creature? The Lord, no doubt. He laid them out in his divine mind, and laid them forth by his divine power; who does all things by

weight and measure. He fixed the dimensions of the earth, how long, how thick, and how broad it should be; he settled the borders and boundaries of it. This Job might know that the Lord did; but he laid them, and what they are that are laid, he knew not. Mathematicians pretend to give us the circumference and diameter of the earth; but in their accounts are not agreed, but widely differ; which shows they are at no certainty about them <sup>f1299</sup>; and Job and the men of his age might be still less knowing: though the words may be rendered, “for thou knowest” <sup>f1300</sup>; surely such a knowing man as thou art must needs know this and so are a severe sarcasm upon him;

*or who hath stretched the line upon it?* The measuring line being formed according to rule, with exact symmetry and proportion. This may be the same with the circle of the earth, and the compass set upon the face of the deep or terraqueous globe, (~~2087~~ Proverbs 8:27 ~~2302~~ Isaiah 40:22). And with the same exactness and just proportion are the ways and works of Providence, which Job ought to have acquiesced in as being well and wisely done.

**Ver. 6.** *Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?* etc.] Or the pillars of it, as Ben Gersom interprets it; (see ~~475B~~ Psalm 75:3); and which Aben Ezra understands of the mountains: but be they what they may, on what can they be fastened or sunk into, when the earth hangs on nothing, and there is nothing visible to support it, nothing but the mighty hand of God?

*or who laid the corner stone thereof?* which unites, cements, and keeps the fabric together, and is the ornament and beauty of it; but who can tell what that is? Aben Ezra interprets it of the point or centre of the earth.

**Ver. 7.** *When the morning stars sang together,* etc.] Either all the stars in a literal sense; for though, strictly speaking, there is but one morning star, yet all may be called so, because early created in the morning of the world; and are all stars of light, shine till the morning; and it is observed by some, that the nearer the morning the brighter they shine: and these in their way sing the praises of God, and set forth the glory of his perfections, and occasion songs of praise in men; (see ~~488B~~ Psalm 148:3 19:1). Or figuratively, either angels, as most interpret them, comparable to stars for their glory, purity, and light, for their constancy, permanency, and numbers: or good men, particularly ministers of the word, and angels of the churches; who are

stars in Christ's right hand, (<sup><612></sup>Revelation 1:20 2:1); but the principal morning star is Christ himself, (<sup><6216></sup>Revelation 22:16);

*and all the sons of God shouted for joy*; which are usually understood of angels also, so the Targum; who are the sons of God, not by birth, as Christ, nor by adoption, as saints; but by creation, as Adam, (<sup><4133></sup>Luke 3:38). And because they bear some likeness to God, as holy spirits, and honour and obey him in doing his will; though the character of sons of God, as distinct from the children of men, given to professors of religion, obtained before the times of Job; (see <sup><1012></sup>Genesis 6:2); and who might be said to sing together, and shout for joy, when they met for social worship; (see <sup><3106></sup>Job 1:6); and especially when any fresh discoveries were made to them of the Messiah, and salvation by him. Thus Abraham, one of these sons of God, saw Christ's day and was glad, and shouted for joy, (<sup><4135></sup>John 8:56). For these words are not necessarily to be restrained to the laying of the foundation and cornerstone of the earth, as our version directs; though indeed the angels then might be present, being created as soon as the heavens were, and with the stars, as Capellus on this place observes; and rejoiced, when the foundations of the earth were laid, on beholding such a display of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God therein; and which may be said of them, in allusion to what is done at the laying of the foundation of any building of note; (see <sup><1510></sup>Ezra 3:10); for it may be repeated from (<sup><3304></sup>Job 38:4); "where wast thou when the morning stars", etc. and so may refer to any rejoicing, whether of angels or men, before the times of Job, at which he was not present.

**Ver. 8.** *Or [who] shut up the sea with doors*, etc.] From the earth the transition is to the sea, according to the order of the creation; and this refers not to the state and case of the sea as at the flood, of which some interpret it, but as at its first creation; and it is throughout this account represented as an infant, and here first as in embryo, shut up in the bowels of the earth, where it was when first created with it, as an infant shut up in its mother's womb, and with the doors of it; (see <sup><3110></sup>Job 3:10); the bowels of the earth being the storehouses where God first laid up the deep waters, (<sup><1317></sup>Psalms 33:7); and when the chaos, the misshapen earth, was like a woman big with child;

*when it brake forth out of the abyss*, as the Targum, with force and violence, as Pharez broke out of his mother's womb; for which reason he

had his name given, which signifies a breach, (<sup><0139></sup>Genesis 38:29); so it follows,

*[as if] it had issued out of the womb*; as a child out of its mother's womb; so the sea burst forth and issued out of the bowels of the earth, and covered it all around, as in (<sup><0406></sup>Psalms 104:6); and now it was that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, before they were drained off the earth; this was the first open visible production of the sea, and may be called the birth of it; (see <sup><0002></sup>Genesis 1:2). Something like this the Heathen philosopher Archelaus had a notion of, who says <sup>f1301</sup>, the sea was shut up in hollow places, and was as it were strained through the earth.

**Ver. 9.** *When I made the cloud the garment thereof*, etc.] For this newborn babe, the sea;

*and thick darkness a swaddling band for it*; which was the case of the sea when it burst out of the bowels of the earth and covered it, for then darkness was upon the face of the deep, a dark, foggy, misty air, (<sup><0002></sup>Genesis 1:2); and this was before its separation from the land, and in this order it stands in this account; though since, clouds, fogs, and mists, which rise out of the sea, are as garments to it, and cover it at times, and the surrounding atmosphere, as it presses the whole terraqueous globe, and keeps the parts of the earth together, so the waters of the sea from spilling out; and these are the garments and the swaddling bands with which the hands and arms of this big and boisterous creature are wreathed; it is said of the infant in (<sup><0304></sup>Ezekiel 16:4) that it was neither "salted nor swaddled at all"; but both may be said of the sea; that it is salted is sufficiently known, and that it is swaddled is here affirmed; but who except the Lord Almighty could do this? and who has managed, and still does and can manage, this unruly creature, as easily as a nurse can turn about and swaddle a newborn babe upon her lap.

**Ver. 10.** *And brake up for it my decreed [place]*, etc.] Or, as Mr. Broughton translates it, "and brake the earth for it by my decree": made a vast chasm in the earth to hold the waters of the sea, which was provided as a sort of cradle to put this swaddled infant in; God cleaved the earth, raised the hills and sank the valleys, which became as channels to convey the waters that ran off the earth to their appointed place, which beautifully expressed in (<sup><0407></sup>Psalms 104:7,8); and refers there, as here, to the work of creation on the second day, (<sup><0002></sup>Genesis 1:9,10) <sup>f1302</sup>;

*and set bars and doors*; to keep it in its decreed appointed place, that the waters might not go over the earth; these are the shores, as the Targum, the cliffs and rocks upon them, the boundaries of the sea; to which may be added, and what is amazing, the sand upon the seashore is such a boundary to it that it cannot pass, (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 5:22); but these would be insufficient was it not for the power and will of God, next expressed.

**Ver. 11.** *And said, hitherto shalt thou come, but no further*, etc.] The waters of the sea shall spread themselves to such and such shores, and wash them, but go no further; its rolling tides shall go up so far in rivers that go out of it, and then return, keeping exactly to time and place; this is said by Jehovah, the Word of God, and through his almighty power is tended to;

*and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*; so high and no higher shall they lift up themselves; so far and no farther shall they roll on, than to the boundaries fixed for them; and though they may toss up themselves as proud men toss up their heads, for which, reason pride is ascribed to them, yet they shall not prevail, (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 5:22); all this may be accommodated to the afflictions of God's people, which are sometimes compared to the waves and billows of the sea, (<sup>1907</sup>Psalms 42:7 88:7); and these issue out of the womb of God's purposes and decrees, and are not the effects of chance; they are many, and threaten to overwhelm, but God is with his people in them, and preserves them from being overflowed by them; he has set the bounds and measures of them, beyond which they cannot go; (see <sup>2208</sup>Isaiah 27:8 43:2); and also to the world, and to the men of it, who are like a troubled sea, (<sup>2100</sup>Daniel 7:2,3 <sup>2571</sup>Isaiah 57:20); and who rise, and swell, and dash against the people of God, being separated from them who were originally mixed with them; but the Lord restrains their wrath and fury, and suffers them not to do his people any harm; whom he has placed in the munition of rocks out of their reach, that those proud waters cannot go over them as they threaten to do; (see <sup>1976</sup>Psalms 76:10 124:2-6).

**Ver. 12.** *Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days*; etc.] Job had lived to see many a morning, but it never was in his power to command one; he had been in such circumstances as to wish for morning light before it was, but was obliged to wait for it, could not hasten it, or cause it to spring before its time; (see <sup>3808</sup>Job 7:3,4); one of the Targums is,

“wast thou in the days of the first creation, and commandedst the morning to be?”

he was not, God was; he was before the first morning, and commanded it into being, (<sup><0002></sup>Genesis 1:3-5 <sup><2313></sup>Isaiah 43:13);

*[and] caused the dayspring to know his place*; the first spring of light or dawn of day; which though it has a different place every day in the year, as the sun ascends or descends in the signs of the Zodiac, yet it knows and observes its exact place, being taught of God.

**Ver. 13.** *That it might take hold of the ends of the earth*, etc.] As when the morning light springs forth, it quickly does, reaching in a short time the extreme part of the hemisphere; which, and what goes before, may be applied to the light of the Gospel, and the direction of that under divine Providence in the several parts of the world, and unto the ends of it; (see <sup><0904></sup>Psalm 19:4-6 <sup><5018></sup>Romans 10:18);

*that the wicked might be shaken out of it?* the earth, by means of the light; which may be understood either of wicked men who have been all night upon works of darkness, and be take themselves on the approach of light to private lurking places, like beasts of prey, so that the earth seems to be, as it were, clear of them; or of their being taken up in the morning for deeds done in the night, and brought to justice, which used to be exercised in mornings, (<sup><2012></sup>Jeremiah 21:12 <sup><0908></sup>Psalm 101:8); and so the earth rid of them: thus wicked men shun the light, of the Gospel, and are condemned by it; and in the latter day light and glory they will cease from the earth; (see <sup><0102></sup>John 3:19,20 <sup><0906></sup>Psalm 10:16 104:35).

**Ver. 14.** *It is turned as clay [to] the seal*, etc.] As the clay receives a different form by the impress of the seal upon it, so the earth appears in a different manner by the spring of morning light upon it; in the darkness of the night nothing of its form and beauty is to be seen; it is a mere “tohu” and “bohu”, like the chaos, (<sup><0002></sup>Genesis 1:2); its rising hills, and spreading dales, and beautiful landscapes, cannot be observed with pleasure; but when the light breaks forth in the morning, it is seen in all its beauty and glory: of the change the light of the Gospel makes in men, (see <sup><0708></sup>2 Corinthians 3:18);

*and they stand as a garment*; or things stand upon it as a garment, as Mr. Broughton renders the words; herbs, plants, and trees, unseen in the night, stand up like a vesture to the earth in the morning light; and as they are



clothed themselves, they are a garment to that, which now puts on another and beautiful habit; the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the valleys covered with corn, and the whole earth with light itself, as with a garment: and as beautifully do men made light in the Lord appear; (see <sup><23110></sup>Isaiah 41:10 <sup><6604></sup>Revelation 3:4,5 12:1).

**Ver. 15.** *And from the wicked their light is withholden*, etc.] Whose light is darkness, and whose day is the night, of which they are deprived when the morning light breaks forth; (see <sup><18247></sup>Job 24:17); it may be figuratively understood of the light of prosperity being removed from them, or the light of life, when they shall be sent into utter darkness;

*and the high arm shall be broken*; their power weakened and made useless; even the power of such wicked men who have had a large share of it, and have used it in a tyrannical manner; and especially this will be their case at death; (see <sup><23140></sup>Isaiah 14:10,12).

**Ver. 16.** *Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?* etc.] The subterraneous passages through which the waters flow into the sea and supply it; or the springs and fountains that rise up at the bottom of it <sup>f1303</sup>; and some tell us of springs of sweet water that rise there, even though the water at the bottom of the sea is saltier than on the surface <sup>f1304</sup>: some render it “the drops of the sea” <sup>f1305</sup>; hast thou considered them and counted them? art thou able to do it? no: others the “perplexities” of it <sup>f1306</sup>, so the Targum, the word being used in this sense, (<sup><0248></sup>Exodus 14:3); the thickets of it; some speak of woods and forests in it, (see Gill on <sup><0209></sup>Exodus 10:19); others “rocks” and shelves <sup>f1307</sup>, and others the “borders” of it <sup>f1308</sup>; and the sense then is, hast thou entered into and travelled through the main ocean, observed the forests in it, the shelving rocks and sandy mountains in it, and gone to the utmost borders of it?

*or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?* to find out the deepest place of it, where no sounding line can reach <sup>f1309</sup>; or walked in quest of the curiosities of it, animals, plants and minerals, unknown to men; or of the riches that lie at the bottom of it, for which now the diving bell is used, but not invented and known in the times of Job; and if Job had not done and could not do all this, how should he be able to enter into the secret springs of Providence, or trace the ways of God, whose way is in the sea, and whose paths are in the great waters, and his footsteps not known? (<sup><19779></sup>Psalms 77:19 <sup><65133></sup>Romans 11:33).



**Ver. 17.** *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?* etc.] Meaning not by which death has entered into the world, and which have been the causes and occasion of it; as the sin of man, the appointment of God, and various providences, calamities and diseases; but by which men enter into the state of the dead. Men know not experimentally what death is, nor in what way they shall go out of the world, nor at what time, nor in what place; they know not what the state of the dead is, there is no correspondence between them and the living; they do not know either what they enjoy or endure, or who precisely and with certainty are in the separate abodes of bliss or misery; the gates of these dark and invisible regions to us have never been thrown open, for mortals to look into them;

*or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?* the same thing in other words; the Targum and Jarchi interpret this of hell.

**Ver. 18.** *Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth?* etc.] Which may be put for all the dimensions of it, length, breadth, diameter, and circumference, but especially it regards the surface of it, and the measurement of that; hast thou gone over the whole face of the earth and measured it, all its parts, its hills and dales, rocks and mountains, and took a survey of all the cities, towns and villages, woods, forests, fountains, rivers, etc? no; if a man lived as long as Methuselah, and spent all his days in this way, he could never be able to do it; and some parts are inaccessible, and not to be measured by the most skilful geometer;

*declare, if thou knowest it all;* the whole earth and every part of it, and all that is in it. Whether the other hemisphere and the antipodes were known in Job's time is a question; however not America, or the new world, which is a late discovery; and even now, in our most exact maps of the world, some parts are marked with "terra incognita", the unknown land.

**Ver. 19.** *Where [is] the way [where] light dwelleth?* etc.] Or the way to the place where it dwells, and what that is;

*and [as for] darkness, where [is] the place thereof?* where these were placed when they were first separated at the creation? where light goes and dwells, when it departs from us at sun setting? and where the darkness betakes itself, and makes its abode at sun rising? What is the chamber of the sun, and the tabernacle of it? from whence it sets out, and whither it returns? And though these questions may be answered by geographers and astronomers in their way; yet they seem to respect chiefly the disposal of

light and darkness, in such a manner as to cause the revolution of them, and the inequality of days and nights in different seasons and climates; and which is not in the power of men to effect, but depends on the sovereign will of God.

**Ver. 20.** *That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof*, etc.] Either darkness, or rather the light; take it as it were by the hand, and guide and direct its course to its utmost bound. This only the Lord can do and does: he has set a tabernacle for the sun, which goes forth at his command as a strong man to run a race; whose going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit unto the ends of it: in which his course is so steered and directed by the Lord, that he never misses his way or errs from it; but keeps his path exactly, as well as knows its rising and setting, its utmost bounds;

*and that thou shouldest know the paths [to] the house thereof?* from whence it sets out, and whither it returns; (see ~~1904~~ Psalm 19:4-6). And so the light and darkness of prosperity and adversity, as well as natural light and darkness, are of God, at his disposal, and bounded by him, and therefore his will should be submitted to; which is the doctrine the Lord would teach Job by all this.

**Ver. 21.** *Knowest thou [it], because thou wast then born?* etc.] When light and darkness were first separated, and had their several apartments assigned them; their laws and rules given them, and their bounds and limits set them? No; he was not: and, had he been the first man, could not have been early enough to have been present at the doing of this, and so come at the knowledge thereof; since man was not made until the sixth day of the creation;

*or [because] the number of thy days [is] great;* reach to the beginning of time, and so as old as the creation. This was not the case. Some understand these words ironically; “thou knowest” the places and bounds of light and darkness, since thou art a very old man, born as soon as the world was. Whereas he was of yesterday, and knew nothing; which to convince him of is the design of this biting, cutting, expression. The Targum is,

“didst thou know then that thou shouldest be born, and the number of thy days many?”

No, Job did not know when he was born, nor of whom, and in what circumstances, but by the relation of others; and much less could he know

before he was born, that he should be, or how long he should live in the world: but God knows all this beforehand; when men shall come into the world, at what period and of what parents, and how long they shall continue in it.

**Ver. 22.** *Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?*] The vapours raised, and clouds formed in the atmosphere, which is the storehouse of those meteors; and may be called treasures, because hidden in the clouds, and not seen by man until the fall of them; and because they are in the keeping, and at the command and direction of the Lord the proprietor of them; and because rich and enriching, especially snow, which falling keeps the earth warm, and makes it fruitful; and because of the abundance thereof which sometimes falls. Now we are not to imagine that the Lord has stores of these laid up in heaps, in times past for time to come; but that he can and does as easily and as soon produce them when he pleases, as one that has treasures laid up can bring them forth at once.

**Ver. 23.** *Which I have reserved against the time of trouble,* etc.] For the punishment or affliction of men; and is explained as follows,

*against the day of battle and war?* as his artillery and ammunition to light his enemies with. Of hail we have instances in Scripture, as employed against the Egyptians and Canaanites, (<sup><1025></sup>Exodus 9:25 <sup><1601></sup>Joshua 10:11); and of a reserve of it in the purposes of God, and in prophecy against the day of battle with antichrist, (<sup><162></sup>Revelation 16:21); and so Jarchi interprets it here of the war of Gog and Magog. And though there are no instances of snow being used in this way in Scripture, yet there is in history. Strabo <sup>f1310</sup> reports, that at Corzena and Cambysena, which join to Mount Caucasus, such snows have fallen, that whole companies of men have been swallowed up in them; and even armies have been overwhelmed with them, as the army of the Gauls <sup>f1311</sup>; and such quantities have been thrown down from mountains, on which they have been lodged, that towns, towers, and villages, have been laid prostrate by them <sup>f1312</sup>; and in the year 443, a vast snow destroyed many <sup>f1313</sup>. Frequently do we hear in our parts of the disasters occasioned by them. The Targum particularly makes mention of snow; and renders it, “which snow I have reserved”, etc. though absurdly applies it to punishment in hell.

**Ver. 24.** *By what way is the light parted,* etc.] That is, dost thou know by what way it is parted or divided? as at the first creation, when God divided

the light from darkness, (~~1000~~Genesis 1:4); or at sun rising and sun setting; and so in the two hemispheres, when there is darkness on the one, and light on the other; or under the two poles, when there are interchangeably six months light and six months darkness. Or how it is parted in an unequal distribution of day and night, at different seasons and in different climates; or how on one and the same day, and at the same time, the sun shall shine in one part of the earth, and not another; and more especially if this had been now a fact, and known, that there should be darkness all over the land of Egypt, and light in Goshen. Some understand this of lightning, but that is later mentioned;

*[which] scattereth the east wind upon the earth?* that rising sometimes with the sun, or first spring of light; (see Jon 4:8); or which light spreads and diffuses itself “from the east”, as it may be rendered. The sun rises in the east, and in a very quick and surprising manner spreads and diffuses its light throughout the hemisphere. Or this may respect the east wind itself, which scatters the clouds; and either spreads them in the heavens over the earth, or disperses them and drives away rain <sup>f1314</sup>, as the north wind does: or as Mr. Broughton renders the words, “and the east wind scattereth itself over the earth”; it blowing invisibly and without our knowledge, goes and returns as other winds do, (~~1000~~John 3:8).

**Ver. 25.** *Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters,* etc.] For a very large shower of rain, as the Vulgate Latin version: for this is not to be understood of an aqueduct, channel, or canal made on earth, either for the draining of waters off of land overflowed thereby, or for the conveyance of it to different parts to overflow it; such as were cut out of the Nile in Egypt, for the overflowing of the land, to make it fruitful; such may be and have been made by men: but of a watercourse in the air or atmosphere, as a canal or channel, for the rain to come down upon the earth; and this is the work of God, and him only, who directs and steers the course of rain, that it falls regularly and gently, not in spouts and floods, but in drops larger or lesser, on what spot of ground, or part of the earth, he pleases: and if what Jarchi says true, that every drop has its course, its canal, through which it passes, it is still more wonderful;

*or a way for the lightning of thunder:* which generally go together, and are of God. His fire and voice, and for which he makes a way, by which they burst and break forth out of the cloud, and their course is directed by him under the whole heavens; (see ~~1000~~Job 28:26 37:3). So the Gospel,

compared to rain and lightning, has its direction and its course steered to what part of the world, he pleases; (see <sup><9904></sup>Psalm 19:4) (<sup><4134></sup>Acts 13:46,47 16:6-10).

**Ver. 26.** *To cause it to rain on the earth, [where] no man [is]; [on] the wilderness, wherein [there is] no man.*] Which is uninhabited by men, being so dry and barren; where there is no man to cultivate and water it, as gardens are; and where is no man to receive any advantage by the rain that comes upon it; and yet the Lord sends it for the use of animals that dwell there; which shows his care and providence with respect even to the wild beasts of the earth. This may be an emblem of the rain of the Gospel upon the Gentile world, comparable to a wilderness; (see <sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 35:1).

**Ver. 27.** *To satisfy the desolate and waste [ground],* etc.] Which is exceeding desolate, and therefore two such words are used to express it; which is so dry and thirsty that it is one of the four things that say not it is enough, (<sup><2106></sup>Proverbs 30:16); and yet God can and does give it rain to its full satisfaction, (<sup><9443></sup>Psalm 104:13); so the Lord satisfies souls, comparable to dry and thirsty ground, by his word and ordinances, with the goodness and fatness of his house; (see <sup><9501></sup>Psalm 63:1-5 65:4);

*and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?* grass for the cattle, and herb for the service of men, (<sup><9444></sup>Psalm 104:14); of like use is the word in a spiritual sense for the budding and increase of the graces of the Spirit in the Lord's people; (see <sup><6512></sup>Deuteronomy 32:2 <sup><2510></sup>Isaiah 55:10,11).

**Ver. 28.** *Hath the rain a father?* etc.] None but God; hence the Heathens themselves call God  $\gamma\epsilon\tau\iota\omicron\varsigma$  <sup>f1315</sup>, and  $\omicron\mu\beta\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  <sup>f1316</sup>; (see <sup><2442></sup>Jeremiah 14:22); he that is our Father in heaven is the Father of rain, and him only; whatever secondary causes there be, God only is the efficient cause, parent, and producer of it: so the Gospel is not of men but of God, is a gift of his, comes down from heaven, carries not for men, and is a great blessing, as rain is;

*or who hath begotten the drops of the dew?* which are innumerable; he that is the parent of the rain is of the dew also, and he only <sup>f1317</sup>; to which sometimes not only the word of God, and his free favour and good will, but the people of God themselves are compared for their number, influence, and use; (see <sup><9803></sup>Psalm 110:3 <sup><3307></sup>Micah 5:7); and their new birth is similar to the generation of dew, it being not of the will of man, but of

God, according to his abundant mercy, free favour, and good will, is from above, from heaven, and is effected silently, secretly, suddenly, at an unawares; (<sup><4013></sup>John 1:13 3:3,5,8).

**Ver. 29.** *Out of whose womb came the ice?* etc.] The parent of the rain and dew is the parent of the ice also, and he only; it is therefore called “his ice”, his child, his offspring, (<sup><4077></sup>Psalm 147:17). Here the Lord is represented as a mother, and so he is by Orpheus <sup>f1318</sup> called “metropator”, or “mother-father”;

*and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?* this is of God, and by his breath; (see <sup><4870></sup>Job 37:10).

**Ver. 30.** *The waters are hid as [with] a stone*, etc.] The surface of the waters by frost become as hard as a stone, and will bear great burdens, and admit of carriages to pass over them <sup>f1319</sup> where ships went before; so that the waters under them are hid and quite out of sight: an emblem of the hard heart of man, which can only be thawed by the power and grace of God, by the south wind of the Spirit blowing, and the “sun of righteousness” rising on it;

*and the face of the deep is frozen*; or bound together by the frost, as the Targum; it is taken, laid hold on, and kept together, as the word signifies, so that it cannot flow. Historians speak of seas being frozen up, as some parts of the Scythian sea, reported by Mela <sup>f1320</sup>, and the Cimmerian Bosphorus, by Herodotus <sup>f1321</sup>, and the northern seas by Olaus Magnus <sup>f1322</sup>; as that men might travel over them on foot or on horseback, from one country to another; and Strabo relates <sup>f1323</sup>, that where a sea fight has been in the summer time, armies and hosts have met and fought in the winter. In Muscovy the ice is to six and ten feet deep <sup>f1324</sup>; in the year 401 the Euxine sea <sup>f1325</sup> was frozen over for the space of twenty days; and in the year 763 the seas at Constantinople were frozen one hundred miles from the shore, so thick as to bear the heaviest carriages <sup>f1326</sup>.

**Ver. 31.** *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades*, etc.] Of which (see Gill on “<sup><4000></sup>Job 9:9”); and this constellation of the seven stars which is meant, rising in the spring, the pleasantnesses of the season, as the word may be rendered, may be intended here; which cannot be restrained or hindered from taking place in the proper course of the year; which is beautifully described in (<sup><2102></sup>Song of Solomon 2:12,13); and may in a spiritual sense relate to the effects of powerful and efficacious grace, the

influences of which are irresistible, and cause a springtime in the souls of men, where it was before winter, a state of darkness, deadness, coldness, hardness, and unfruitfulness, but now the reverse. Some versions read, “the bands of the Pleiades” <sup>f1327</sup>, as if the sense was, canst thou gather and bind, or cluster together, such a constellation as the seven stars be, as I have done? thou canst not; and so not stop their rising or hinder their influences, according to the other versions:

*or loose the bands of Orion?* of which (see Gill on “~~800~~Job 9:9”) and (~~300B~~Amos 5:8). This constellation appears in the winter, and brings with it stormy winds, rain, snow, and frost, which latter binds up the earth, that seeds and roots in it cannot spring up; and binds the hands of men from working, by benumbing them, or rendering their materials or utensils useless; for which reasons bands are ascribed to Orion, and are such strong ones that it is not in the power of men to loose: the seasons are not to be altered by men; and, Job might be taught by this that it was not in his power to make any change in the dispensations of Providence; to turn the winter of adversity into the spring of prosperity; and therefore it was best silently to submit to the sovereignty of God, and wait his time for a change of circumstances.

**Ver. 32.** *Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?* etc.] Which are thought to be the same with “the chambers of the south”, (~~800~~Job 9:9); the southern pole <sup>f1328</sup> with its stars, signified by chambers, because hidden from our sight in this part of the globe; and here by Mazzaroth, from, “nazar”, to separate, because separated and at a distance from us; some think <sup>f1329</sup> the twelve signs of the Zodiac are meant, each of which are brought forth in their season, not by men, but by the Lord; (see ~~200B~~Isaiah 40:26);

*or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?* a constellation of many stars called its sons, of which (see ~~800~~Job 9:9). Schmidt conjectures that Jupiter and his satellites are meant; but rather what we call the greater and lesser Bear, in the tail of which is the north pole star, the guide of mariners, said <sup>f1330</sup> to be found out by Thales, by which the Phoenicians sailed, but is not to be guided by men; this, constellation is fancied to be in the form of a wain or wagon, and is called Charles’s wain; could this be admitted, there might be thought to be an allusion to it <sup>f1331</sup>, and the sense be, canst thou guide and lead this constellation, as a wagon or team of horses can be



guided and led? stars have their courses, (<sup><0701></sup>Judges 5:20); but are not steered, guided, and directed by men, but by the Lord himself.

**Ver. 33.** *Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?* etc.] Settled by the decree, purpose, and will of God, and are firm and stable; (see <sup><4836></sup>Psalm 148:6 <sup><4835></sup>Jeremiah 31:35,36); the laws and statutes respecting their situation, motion, operation, influence, and use, which are constantly observed; these are so far from being made by men, and at their direction, that they are not known by them, at least not fully and perfectly;

*canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?* or over it; of the heavens over the earth; not such an one as judicial astrologers ascribe unto them, as to influence the bodies of men, especially the tempers and dispositions of their minds; to affect their wills and moral actions, the events and occurrences of their lives, and the fate of nations and kingdoms; their dominion is not moral and civil, but physical or natural, as to make the revolutions of night and day, and of the several seasons of the year; and to affect and influence the fruits of the earth, etc. (see <sup><0016></sup>Genesis 1:16 <sup><6513></sup>Deuteronomy 33:13,14 <sup><8121></sup>Hosea 2:21-23); but this dominion is solely under God, and at his direction, and is not of men's fixing.

**Ver. 34.** *Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?*] Thy gardens, fields, and farms; canst thou, in a magisterial way, call to and demand of the clouds to let down rain in large quantities, sufficient to water them and make them fruitful? no, thou canst not: thou mayest cry and call as long as thou wilt, not a cloud will stir, nor a drop of water be let down; rain is to be had in a suppliant way, through the prayer of faith, as by Elijah, but not in a dictatorial authoritative way: the clouds and rain are only at the disposal of the Lord; ask of him, and he will give them; but they are not to be commanded, (<sup><3001></sup>Zechariah 10:1); (see <sup><3188></sup>Amos 5:8).

**Ver. 35.** *Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we [are]?*] Thy humble servants; we have been where thou didst send us, and have executed what we were bid to do, and are returned, and here we are waiting further orders; (see <sup><4889></sup>Matthew 8:9); no; lightnings are only at the command of God, and there have been some awful instances of it, (<sup><6101></sup>Leviticus 10:1 <sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:1 16:35); but not in the power of men; indeed we have an extraordinary instance in Elijah, who, at the motion, and under the impulse of the spirit of prophecy in him, called for fire, or lightning, to consume captains with their fifties, and it came down

on them, and consumed them, (<sup><2110></sup>2 Kings 1:10,12); but he is not to be imitated herein: when the disciples of Christ desired the same upon a provocation, they were severely reprov'd by him, (<sup><1154></sup>Luke 9:54,55); were these at the call and dispose of men, what dreadful things would be done in the world! for if good men, when provok'd, would make use of such a power to destroy the lives of men, much more bad men; and our eyes would continually behold the flashes of lighting, and our ears hear the roarings of thunder, and the terrible effects thereof; but neither mercies nor judgments are at the command of men, but of God.

**Ver. 36.** *Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?* etc.] That is, of man, in his heart, as explained in the next clause; such wisdom as to guide the stars, know the ordinances of heaven, set their dominion on earth, manage and direct the clouds and lightning; no such wisdom is put in man:

*or who hath, given understanding to the heart?* to understand all the above things, and answer to the several questions put in this chapter; though, as these clauses may respect much one and the same thing, they may be understood of wisdom and understanding in man, whether natural or spiritual; and seeing they are found there, the question is, who put them there, or how came they there? who gave them to him? the answer must be, God himself, and no other; man has his rational soul, his intellectual powers, the light of nature and reason in him; all his understanding in arts and sciences, trades and manufactures, is of the Lord, and not of himself or another, (see <sup><1318></sup>Job 32:8 <sup><1318></sup>Exodus 36:1,2) (<sup><2323></sup>Isaiah 28:23-29); all spiritual wisdom and understanding which lies in a man's concern for his eternal welfare in the knowledge of himself, and of his state and condition by nature, and of the way of life and salvation by Christ, and of the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, is all of God and Christ, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; no man, therefore, has any reason to glory in his wisdom and knowledge, of whatsoever kind, as though he had not received it; nor should he dare to arraign the wisdom of God in his providential dealings with men; since he that teaches man knowledge must needs know better than man how to govern the world he has made, and dispose of all things in it. The last clause is in the Vulgate Latin rendered, "who hath given to the cock understanding?" and so the Targums and other Jewish writers <sup>f1332</sup> interpret it; and they observe <sup>f1333</sup>, that in Arabia a cock is called by the word that is here used; and in their morning prayers, and at hearing a cock crow <sup>f1334</sup>,

“Blessed be the Lord, who giveth to the cock understanding to distinguish between the day and the night:”

but however remarkable the understanding of this creature is, which God has given it, and which is even taken notice of by Heathen writers <sup>f1335</sup>; that it should know the stars, distinguish the hours of the night by crowing, and express its joy at the rising of the sun and moon; yet such a sense of the text seems impertinent, as well as that of the Septuagint version, of giving to women the wisdom and knowledge of weaving and embroidery.

**Ver. 37.** *Who can number the clouds in wisdom?* etc.] Or has such wisdom as to be able to count them when the heavens are full of them; hence they are used to denote a great multitude, (<sup><2578></sup>Isaiah 55:8 <sup><3111></sup>Hebrews 12:1); or “declare” them <sup>f1336</sup>, set forth and explain the nature of them, their matter, motion, and use; none can do this perfectly or completely. Aben Ezra interprets it, who can make them as sapphire? in which he is followed by Mr. Broughton and others <sup>f1337</sup>; the sapphire is a precious stone, very clear and lucid, of a sky colour. And then the sense is, who can make a clear and serene sky, when it is cloudy? None but the Lord; (see <sup><3871></sup>Job 37:11);

*or who can stay the bottles of heaven?* or “barrels”, as Mr. Broughton; the clouds in which the rain is bottled or barrelled up; and when it is the pleasure of God to pour them out, who can stay, stop, or restrain them? or who can “cause [them] to lie down” <sup>f1338</sup>? that is, on the earth; to descend or “distil” on it, as the same translator. Who can do this, when it is the will of God to withhold them? To stop or unstop, those bottles, to restrain rain, or pour it forth, is entirely at his dispose, and not man’s; (see <sup><3834></sup>Job 38:34 <sup><1082></sup>Genesis 8:2 <sup><3107></sup>Amos 4:7).

**Ver. 38.** *When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?*] When the dust is attenuated, and ground, as it were, into powder; and the clods cleave together, as if glued, as in a drought for want of rain: or the bottles of heaven being unstopped and poured out; or

“sprinkling the dust with this sprinkling,”

as Mr. Broughton. Or rather, pouring on the dust with pouring; that is, pouring down rain, by unstopping the bottles of heaven. The dust, as meal, by water poured into it, cements, unites, and is compacted, and becomes earth, that may be cultivated; is clodded and cleaves together, and may be ploughed and sown.

**Ver. 39.** *Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion?* etc.] From meteors the Lord passes to animals, beasts, and birds, wherefore some here begin the thirty ninth chapter, which only treats of such; and he begins with the lion, the strongest among beasts, and most fierce; cruel, and voracious; and asks, who hunts his prey for him? Not man, who cannot; and if he could, durst not: but the Lord does; and, according to some writers <sup>f1339</sup>, he has provided a small creature, between a fox and a wolf, called a jackal; which goes before the lion, and hunts the prey for him. And could this be understood particularly of the old lion, as Cocceius and others, naturalists <sup>f1340</sup> observe, that young lions hunt for the old ones, when they are not able to go in search of prey; and when they have got it, either bring it to them, or call them to partake of it with them;

*or fill the appetite of the young lions*, whose appetite is sharp and keen, and requires a great deal to fill it, and especially to satisfy a great many of them; herds of them, as Mr. Broughton renders the word, and which signifies a company; (see <sup><9830></sup>Psalm 68:30). Men cannot feed them, but God can and does; there being some ends in Providence to be answered thereby, (see <sup><9442></sup>Psalm 104:21); see also (<sup><9818></sup>Psalm 34:8-10).

**Ver. 40.** *When they couch in [their] dens, [and] abide in the covert to lie in wait?*] Which some understand of old lions, who, for want of strength, lie couchant in their dens, or in some covert place, waiting for any prey that passes by, to seize upon it. But the same pasture and places are used by younger lions, as well as old ones; who are emblems of wicked men, cruel persecutors, and bloodthirsty tyrants, who fill their palaces and kingdoms with murder and rapine; (see <sup><9908></sup>Psalm 10:8-10) (Na 2:11,12).

**Ver. 41.** *Who provideth for the raven his food?* etc.] Not man, but God; he feeds the ravens, creatures very voracious, mean, and useless, (<sup><9724></sup>Luke 12:24);

*when his young ones cry unto God*; cry for want of food; which is interpreted by the Lord as a cry unto him, and he relieves them, (<sup><9470></sup>Psalm 147:9); when deserted by the old ones; either left in their nests through forgetfulness, as some <sup>f1341</sup>; or because they are not, till fledged, black like them, as others <sup>f1342</sup>; when God feeds them, as some say <sup>f1343</sup>, with a kind of dew from heaven, or with flies that fly about them, and fall into their mouths; or with worms bred out of their dung but these things are not to be depended on; it may rather respect them when cast out of the nest by

the old ones, when able to fly, which is testified by naturalists <sup>f1344</sup>; and with this agrees what follows:

*they wander for lack of meat*; being obliged to shift for themselves, when God takes care of them; which is an instance of his providential goodness; and how this is to be improved, (see <sup><06></sup>Matthew 6:26 <sup><024></sup>Luke 12:24).