

Message #41

Job 39:1-30

One of the most wonderful professions that a person can be involved in is the profession of veterinary medicine. The people who love animals and try to help them and heal them is truly a God-honoring profession. Back in 1850, in the United States, the first veterinarians were, for the most part, trained in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. Today there are many good schools and one of them is in East Lansing, Michigan, at Michigan State University.

Initially, the main thrust of those who try to medically work with animals was, for the most part, horses. In fact, veterinarians were often called “horse doctors.” However, today the veterinarian deals with all kinds of wonderful animals from dogs to cats to birds to bunnies. There must be a special place in the heart of God for those who take care of these animals, because that is the very heart of God.

In Psalm 50:10-11, we read these words: “For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine.” God is the originator and owner of the entire animal world. He watches over the animals to see how they are treated and trained. Animals belong to God and that point is clear right here.

In Job 39, God uses the animal world to make a point—namely, I am the sovereign creator of all things; I am in sovereign charge of all things; I am in sovereign care of all things and I am in sovereign control of all things.

There will be times in our lives when we will simply have to trust God while saying “I don’t know.” “I don’t know exactly what God is doing or why He is permitting this, but He is sovereign, He can do what He wants and I will love Him and trust Him.”

Job 39 is the second discourse between God and Job and it is designed to teach Job a very critical point:

GOD IS IN COMPLETE SOVEREIGN CONTROL AND IS SOVEREIGNLY CARING FOR EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE, INCLUDING EVERY ANIMAL AND BIRD, NO MATTER WHERE IT LIVES OR WHEN IT LIVES.

David Thomas, a leading pastor of London in the 1800’s, believed that every person should study zoology. In fact, he said it was the religious duty to study animals and zoology for at least three reasons: 1) The study of animals supplies us with glorious revelation about God; 2) The study of animals supplies us with hope in the glorious care of God; 3) The study of animals supplies us with illustrations of various human character portraits.

God’s care of the animal world clearly demonstrates the greatness of God and it should cause every human being to stand in awe of God. In this chapter there are six animal facts we want to observe:

ANIMAL FACT #1 – God sovereignly controls the birth of mountain goats and deer .

39:1-4

In Psalm 104:18, we read that “the high mountains are for the wild goats.” In fact, when King David was on the run from Saul, he hid high up in the mountains at a place called “the Rocks of the Wild Goats” (I Sam. 24:2).

In these verses we learn a great deal about the miracle of birth concerning the mountain goat and the deer.

The time of conception and the time of birth for the mountain goat and deer are controlled by God. These animals have an amazing God-given peculiarity—as soon as their offspring is born, they (the offspring) are capable of surviving.

In fact, as soon as the offspring of a goat and deer are strong, it leaves its mother forever. In the human world, the development of a child takes years, but in the animal world the development of a goat or deer takes months.

The fact is mountain goats get into such remote areas in the mountains that most humans will never even see them. When these animals are born there are no veterinarians around, there is no medical help; in fact, these animals are born in the mountains and in such remote places that you never see it.

Now who is there to care for those animals? It is the sovereign God of the Bible.

Back in about 1993, a man from church and myself hauled his horses to Wyoming to scout an area in the Teton National Forest that we wanted to hunt the following fall. We somewhat knew the country, but we wanted to check out certain places we had never seen. We rode into this huge basin and decided to take those horses up on top of a very steep mountain at the west end. In fact, it was so steep that we got off and walked our horses up until we got to a place where it was safe. Up on top we started to ride and there in the high mountain grass was a small elk calf. When he saw us, he put his head down. He was a wonderful creation of God. The mother was nowhere to be found, but this little guy knew how to survive and I thought to myself, God made you and is watching over you way up here where most people will never go.

ANIMAL FACT #2 – God sovereignly designs and provides for the wild donkey . **39:5-8**

The only donkeys we know much about are domesticated donkeys, not wild donkeys. But wild donkeys do still exist in some parts of Arabia. A wild donkey was far more dignified than a domestic donkey and was admired because it was beautiful, swift and strong.

It had an unusual ability to survive and even thrive in places man cannot survive—places such as a wilderness or in salt flats or mountains. The wild donkey was able to search out green plants in any environment. It was a tough animal that shied away from any place where humans are.

Dr. Samuel Cox claims that a wild donkey was faster than the fastest horse (*Job*, p. 523). Those who have owned donkeys or mules will argue that they are a much smoother ride than on the back of a horse. Who designed this amazing animal? Who designed the remote places where this animal can live? Who gave this animal its strength and speed and survival abilities? The sovereign God of the Bible is the one who designed and cares for the wild donkey.

ANIMAL FACT #3 – God sovereignly designed the wild ox. **39:9-12**

Now one of the things brought out about this animal is that it is a powerful animal that has horns (Num. 23:22; 24:8; Deut. 33:17).

In fact, because of the horns, some old English translations follow the Latin Vulgate's interpretation and use the word "unicorn" here, but it is not legitimate. The actual Hebrew word "Rem" is one that compares to the buffalo or wild bull (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 751). A good, modern day perspective of what a "wild ox" is would be something like a "cape buffalo" in Africa. They are powerful animals with horns.

God's point here is that no man can tame one of these great animals. No man was able to turn a wild ox into a farm or ranch animal that would plow fields for you. The wild ox was not to be tamed and could not be turned into a trusted animal for service.

No man can control this animal, but God says, "I can." What we actually have in the wild ox is an animal that cannot be tamed by any human. When you look at an animal like this you have to stand in awe of the God who designed such an animal because we cannot even get near it.

ANIMAL FACT #4 – God sovereignly designed the ostrich. **39:13-18**

The ostrich appears to be a stupid and silly bird. It flaps its wings joyously but never flies anywhere. It has beautiful feathers that are, for the most part, useless because it doesn't fly. She abandons her eggs and forgets that they are her eggs. In fact, the Arabs call it a "wicked bird" because she does not care for her eggs. From all practical observations, she appears to be a stupid bird.

Ostriches can stand up to ten feet high and weigh as much as 330 pounds. It is able to take 12 foot strides and run for 15 minutes at 30 miles per hour if trying to escape a predator. Ostriches have exceptional eyesight with 360 degree vision and she can lift her featherless leg with its two clawed toes and with one kick tear open a lion or a man. We may not know the purpose of this silly bird, but the fact is God designed it. God does what He wants even when He makes a bird with wings that cannot fly.

Verse 17 clearly reveals that she acts the way she acts because God says He made her forget wisdom and He has not given her a share of understanding. This is why she lays eggs and so forgets about them that she can step on them.

Now let us put this in the human realm. God is a sovereign God who can give wisdom. Some people are as silly as these ostriches. They flap their wings and never go anywhere. They flap their mouths and never say anything. They don't seem to think like most people. The truth is God still designed them and they have a purpose, even though we may not understand it.

ANIMAL FACT #5 – God sovereignly designed the horse . **39:19-25**

In contrast to the ostrich is the brave military stallion and horse that is fearless. The horse is so fearless that he will charge into battle and gallop into war. Weapons do not intimidate a military horse. He is not afraid to charge into dangerous situations. He has a beautiful flowing mane (v. 19) and when a horse hears the trumpet blast to charge he moves straight ahead.

Those horses can take you to places you cannot get on the back of any motorcycle. In fact, probably the best mountain motorcycle that is designed to take you into the mountains is a two-wheel drive Rokon Trailbreaker. It has a 7 horsepower four stroke Kohler engine and it is a quiet, clean-running motorcycle that is built to “go anywhere.” There is a low-range and a mid-range and the top speed is 30. It has a 15-inch ground clearance so you can go over logs and rocks. It will cross water two feet deep and if it is deeper water, it is designed to float. You lay the bike on its side and go across the water. It is able to climb steep grades. This is as impressive a mountain motorcycle that \$7,000 can buy. It still cannot do what a horse can do. It cannot go to all the places a horse can go. When on a motorcycle, you have to stay focused on the trail and cannot analyze what is happening around you. A horse can cross deeper water, climb steeper grades and bring you safely down mountains in the dark that is impossible for a motorcycle. You can do switchbacks on a horse in near vertical mountains that you could never do on a cycle. Horses can take you through deeper snow than even a Rokon would with chains. Rokon's are the best man can build, but they are not as good as the horse God made.

In my life, I have had the opportunity to sit on the back of a horse in some very intimidating places and situations. The horse that I am talking about is Solomon, who is one-half Arab. I have been on this horse in the pitch dark heading up a mountain and had him snort and charge right up and I can't even see the trail. One night, I was hunting alone and just before dark I climbed on Solomon's back and we started to ride back to camp, which was about an eight mile ride. We were on the trail on the side of a mountain and there standing on the trail was a bull moose. He was no more than 25 yards away. He was staring at us and we were staring at him. There was nowhere for us to go and the only way for us to get out of this situation was for him to move. I said to Solomon let's go and that horse moved straight at that moose. He moved with confidence right at him and when he did the moose went right up the side of the mountain. I thought what an amazing animal, what an amazing friend.

Who designed this magnificent, fearless animal we call a horse? Who gave this horse its fearless spirit? Who designed an animal that can take a human up on top of a mountain and then bring him safely down again? It is the God of the Bible.

ANIMAL FACT #6 – God sovereignly designed the hawk and eagle. **39:26-30**

No birds are as impressive as these two. No bird hovers so high as the hawk and eagle. They live in tough places, they fly at high altitudes and they see at incredible distances. They can fly and swoop down at speeds of over 150 miles per hour.

Last December, in Montreal, a golden eagle with a wing span of about six feet swept down and grabbed a baby and tried to carry it away. It was able to carry it a few feet before it finally dropped the baby on the ground. These are powerful majestic birds. In fact, someone said the father needs to watch his baby like a hawk.

David Thomas cited three accounts from history in which an eagle carried away a child.

- 1) In Norway, in 1737, a boy nearly two was carried away by an eagle in the sight of his parents;
- 2) Anderson, in his history of Iceland, says several children ages 4-5 were carried off by eagles.
- 3) Ray says a one year old child was carried off by an eagle for some 4 miles (*Job*, p. 454).

These are very powerful birds and they have been made by God.

Now God's main point of all of these animal illustrations is seen in Job 40:1-2, namely, what man is in any position to contend with God since He is in such sovereign control?

I don't care what is happening in our world, we are in no position to criticize or question God because we do not know what God is doing. God has designed and cares for all things.

Parting Thoughts

1. Wise people will be very kind to animals knowing they are created and monitored by God.
2. Wise people realize that everything is controlled by God.
3. Wise people realize God is at work caring for all things even when we don't have a clue what He is doing.
4. No matter how unusual or silly something may appear to be, God is still in sovereign control.