

Job 12:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

Analysis

Job appeals to observable nature: 'But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.' The imperatives 'ask' (לְאַשׁ, she'al) and 'tell' (יָגֵד, yaged—declare, inform) invite empirical observation. Job is building toward a point: nature reveals that God's sovereignty doesn't operate according to simple moral causation. The innocent suffer; the wicked prosper. This anticipates Paul's argument in Romans 1:19-20 that creation reveals God, but Job uses it to challenge, not confirm, retribution theology. Creation reveals God's power and majesty, but not necessarily His moral governance in ways Zophar assumes. The Reformed tradition values both special and general revelation.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom literature frequently appealed to nature for instruction (Proverbs 6:6-8, 30:24-28). Job subverts this tradition by using natural observation not to confirm conventional wisdom but to challenge it.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does observation of the natural world teach us about God's ways that differs from simplistic formulas?
2. How do we balance learning from nature with recognizing its limitations after the Fall?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה	שָׁאַל	תְּאַלֵּן	בְּהָמָת	וְתִּתְּعַכְּבָּה	וְתִּתְּעַכְּבָּה	בְּעֵזֶב
But	ask	H4994	now the beasts	and they shall teach	thee and the fowls	
H199	H7592		H929	H3384		H5775

וְאַתָּה	שָׁמַע	תְּיִצְאֶה	לְבָבֶךָ
of the air	and they shall tell		H0

| H8064 | H5046 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 1:3 (Parallel theme): The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Proverbs 6:6 (Parallel theme): Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

Jeremiah 8:7 (Parallel theme): Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.