

Job 37:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?

Analysis

Hast thou with him spread out the sky (תַּرְקִיעַ שְׁמָקִים, tarpia shechaqim)—the verb (raqa) means to stamp, beat out, or spread like hammering metal into thin sheets. The heavens appear **strong** (חֲזָקִים, chazaqim, firm/solid) **as a molten looking glass** (מְרָאָה יְצֻוָּה, mareh yetzuqah), referring to polished bronze mirrors. Ancient Near Eastern cosmology pictured the sky as a solid dome (raqia, Genesis 1:6-8) beaten out like bronze, reflecting light brilliantly.

Elihu's challenge: Did you assist God in spreading the heavens? The question devastates human pretension. Isaiah 40:22 similarly describes God 'that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain.' We contribute nothing to creation's maintenance—the sky's daily appearance requires no human effort. If we cannot participate in upholding physical creation, we certainly cannot fathom God's moral purposes. This prepares for God's own response: 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?' (Job 38:4).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern peoples observed the sky's apparent solidity and reflective brilliance, especially in desert climates where the daytime sky appears as burnished metal. The bronze mirror comparison reflects Bronze Age technology (approximately 3000-1200 BC). Elihu uses imagery his audience understood: if skilled craftsmen beat bronze into mirrors, how much greater is God who 'hammered out' the vast heavens?

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. When did you last contemplate creation's vastness as a reason to trust God's wisdom in areas you don't understand?
2. How does the fact that creation continues without human assistance inform your view of divine providence?
3. What does our inability to 'spread the sky' teach about our inability to manage our own lives independently?

Interlinear Text

כָּר֣א יְהִי־
לְשִׁפְקָע֣ יְמִינְךָ
תְּרִקָּע֣ יְמִינְךָ
חַזְקָע֣ יְמִינְךָ
עַמּוֹ
H5973 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
the sky
H7834 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
which is strong
H2389 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
looking glass
H7209 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
the sky
H5973 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
the sky
H7834 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
which is strong
H2389 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
looking glass
H7209 הַשְׁפְּקָעִים
the sky

מִזְבֵּחַ

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 44:24 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

Psalms 104:2 (Parallel theme): Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Exodus 38:8 (Kingdom): And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org