

Job 38:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

Analysis

"Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all." God challenges Job to comprehend earth's vast dimensions. The Hebrew *rachavey-erets* (רַחֲבֵי-אָרֶץ, "breadth/expanses of earth") emphasizes magnitude beyond human grasp. This question humbles human pretensions to comprehensive knowledge. If Job cannot comprehend spatial dimensions, how can he judge God's governance? The verse teaches epistemic humility—recognizing knowledge's limits is wisdom's beginning. It prepares Job to trust God's wisdom in matters beyond human understanding.

Historical Context

Ancient people had limited geographical knowledge. The earth seemed vast and largely unknown. Modern exploration has mapped the planet, yet the universe's vastness now dwarfs ancient imagination. The principle remains—human knowledge is minuscule compared to God's omniscience. This would comfort Job and readers facing inexplicable circumstances.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing the limits of our knowledge affect our posture toward God?
2. What specific situations require you to trust God's wisdom despite your limited understanding?

Interlinear Text

הִ	תִּבְנַתְתָּ	עַד	כֹּבֶבְיִ	אֶצְזָל	תְּגִתְּתָ	אָמֵן	תְּגִתְּתָ	אָמֵן	תְּגִתְּתָ	אָמֵן
Hast thou perceived	H5704	the breadth	H7338	of the earth	H776	declare	H5046	H518	if thou knowest	H3045
H995										

כָּלֵן:
H3605

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 20:9 (Parallel theme): And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Jeremiah 31:37 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.