

Job 38:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Analysis

God asks: "Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?" The Hebrew maddeyya (מַדְעָה, "its measures") and qav (קָב, "line") use surveying language. God challenges Job with creation's precise design—dimensions, proportions, mathematical precision. This reveals divine wisdom in establishing natural laws and cosmic order. The rhetorical questions expose human ignorance about creation's foundations while affirming God's sovereign craftsmanship. The interrogative structure characterizes God's entire speech, reorienting Job from demanding answers to recognizing his creatureliness.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts lacked the mathematical precision suggested here. Genesis 1 similarly emphasizes ordered creation through divine decree. The surveying imagery would resonate with Job's original audience familiar with land measurement and building construction. God's questions assert that creation required infinite wisdom beyond any human architect or builder.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God's precise design of creation affect our trust in His governance of our lives?
2. What areas of life tempt us to question God's wisdom rather than humbly acknowledge our limited understanding?

Interlinear Text

מִ	שָׁ	מְ	מִ	תִּ	תִּ	תִּ	אָ	תִּ
H4310	Who hath laid	H7760	the measures	H4461	H3588	thereof if thou knowest	H176	H4310
						H3045		
	נָ	עַ	לִ	לְ				
or who hath stretched	H5186	H5921		H6957				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:12 (Parallel theme): Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Job 11:9 (Parallel theme): The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

Isaiah 40:22 (Parallel theme): It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

Isaiah 34:11 (Parallel theme): But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

Psalms 19:4 (Parallel theme): Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Psalms 78:55 (Parallel theme): He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

Job 28:25 (Parallel theme): To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

Proverbs 8:29 (Parallel theme): When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

Proverbs 8:27 (Parallel theme): When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

2 Corinthians 10:16 (Parallel theme): To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.