

JOB

Chapter 26

Job Replies: God's Majesty Is Unsearchable

Then Job answered and said: 2 “How you have helped him who has no power! How you have saved the arm that has no strength! 3 How you have counseled him who has no wisdom, and plentifully declared sound knowledge! 4 With whose help have you uttered words, and whose breath has come out from you? 5 The dead tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. 6 Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering. 7 He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing. 8 He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not split open under them. 9 He covers the face of the full moon and spreads over it his cloud. 10 He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. 11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his rebuke. 12 By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered Rahab. 13 By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent. 14 Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?”

26:1–4 Job uses bitter sarcasm to respond to Bildad’s speech (ch 25). Bildad’s words concerning God’s greatness and humankind’s lowliness offer very little comfort to Job as he sits in the ashes (2:8) and suffers. (TLSB)

26:2–4 With biting sarcasm, Job responds to Bildad alone (the Hebrew for the words “you” and “your” in these verses is singular rather than plural), indicating that Eliphaz and Zophar have already been silenced. (CSB)

26:2 *saved the arm that has no strength.* Job refers to himself as “powerless” and “feeble” because of his obvious physical afflictions and his loss of property. (PBC)

26:4 *who has helped you utter these words* – Did Job possibly suspect that his so-called friends were acting as servants of Satan? Were they unknowingly aiding him in his attempt to destroy Job as he was struggling with his many problems. (PBC)

26:5–14 Job’s poem about the vast power of God, the theme of Bildad’s final speech (ch. 25), is written in colorful language that is often highly figurative. (CSB)

26:5 *The dead.* The Hebrew for this expression is translated “spirits of the dead” in Pr 2:18, “spirits of the departed” in Isa 14:9 and “departed spirits” in Isa 26:14. The term is used figuratively of the deceased who inhabit the netherworld. (CSB)

dead tremble under the waters. In the judgment and darkness of Sheol. (TLSB)

Job describes God as the One who has complete power over the dead. When death beckons, all must yield. (PBC)

waters. Part of the world inhabited by living beings, and therefore above the netherworld. (CSB)

their inhabitants. Sea creatures. Where Bildad measured God's greatness by looking up into the sky (25:5), Job probes the depths of the earth and the seas to find anything like God. The Lord will surpass Job's efforts (chs 40–41). (TLSB)

26:6 *Sheol.* Hebrew for Sheol = Realm of the dead, described as place full of darkness where the dead dwell); personified elsewhere as the "king of terrors." (CSB)

naked before God. No one hides from God, not even those in Sheol. Cf Ps 139:7–10. (TLSB)

Abaddon In Rev 9:11, Abaddon is the name of the "angel of the Abyss." (CSB)

Bottomless pit; another name for Sheol. Word comes from a verb meaning "to destroy" and describes a place of death and damnation (28:22; 31:12) that is known to God. Cf Pr 15:11; Rv 9:11. (TLSB)

There the name is attributed to Satan. God has full power over death, the grave, hell and Satan. (PBC)

26:7 *He.* God. (CSB)

void. The Hebrew for this word is translated "formless" in Ge 1:2. (CSB)

nothing. God created the earth out of nothing, solely by the power of His Word. Cf Heb 11:3. By the same power, all things now remain in their right place, dependent on nothing but God. (TLSB)

26:8 *binds up the waters in His thick clouds.* Reference to work God began on second day of creation and continues to do. Cf Gn 1:6–8. (TLSB)

26:9 *full moon* – This would best be translated as "his throne," that is, God's throne. The Bible elsewhere speaks of heaven as God's throne, for example, Isaiah 40:22 and 66:1. (PBC)

26:10 *a circle.* Cf Gn 1:7–8. (TLSB)

boundary. Horizon, from which dawn and sunset begin. (TLSB)

26:11 *pillars of heaven.* Figurative for the towering mountains (cf 9:5–6). (TLSB)

This expression possibly refers to the mountains that can be seen from great distances. They appear as if they hold up the heavens. (PBC)

26:12 *he stilled the sea.* (CSB)

Frequently the OT writers describe God as a great warrior conquering the forces of evil. The sea is regarded as the personification of the dark and evil powers of nature. In poems of ancient Canaanite and Near Eastern mythology, the gods are described as fighting against and subduing forces of nature such as the sea and its monsters. Using some of the same vocabulary, but without the crude polytheistic connotations of pagan mythology, Job describes the true God as the One who overcomes such forces of evil. (PBC)

Rahab. This word is not to be confused with the name of the former prostitute who kindly helped Israelite spies at Jericho. This Rahab is not a person, but rather the personification of all evil forces. (PBC)

26:13 *fleeing serpent*. A description of the sea monster Leviathan. (CSB)

Elsewhere called “Leviathan. (TLSB)

Another designation for the sea monster that also pictures an evil enemy. (PBC)

26:14 *these are but the outskirts of his ways*. What God has revealed of his dominion over natural and supernatural forces amounts to no more than a whisper. Job is impressed with the severely limited character of man’s understanding. Zophar had chided Job about his inability to fathom the mysteries of God (11:7–9), but the knowledge possessed by Job’s friends was not superior to that of Job himself (see 12:3; 13:2). (CSB)

God’s mighty deeds recorded in vv 7–13 are relatively small things that He effortlessly performed. (TLSB)

thunder of his power. If it is difficult for us to comprehend the little that we know about God, how much more impossible it would be to understand the full extent of his might. (CSB)

We have heard only a little of God’s work. How much more remarkable to hear the rest! (TLSB)

Ch 26 The almighty God has created the heavens and the earth (v 7) and still controls all things (vv 8–10). But this work is merely the “outskirts of His ways” (v 14)—as if the entire creation were a little fringe hanging from the edge of His cloak! As great as the creation appears in our eyes, our Creator towers above it. Yet, for our salvation, the limitless Creator allowed Himself to be confined to the limits of our humanity when Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. • Cover me, O Lord, in Your robe of righteousness, and tower over my foes. Amen. (TLSB)