Of Stars and Sea Monsters: Creation Theology in the Whirlwind Speeches

Kathryn M. Schifferdecker, Luther Seminary

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Abstract
The whirlwind speeches at the end of Job (Job 38–41) depict a cosmos that is radically non-anthropocentric. This cosmos includes creatures and places indifferent towards human beings and quite dangerous for them. Nevertheless, God delights in these wild creatures and places and gives them a place in creation. Job responds to the whirlwind speeches by choosing to live with the same freedom God grants all of God’s creatures.

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The radically non-anthropocentric theology of the divine speeches is at odds with creation theology as it is articulated by the various speakers in the first thirty-seven chapters. The Satan, in the opening prose tale, represents the world as a neatly ordered place, with Job at the center of it. It is ordered for Job’s protection, as long as he is submissive to God. The genius of the divine speeches is to show that the world is “neither what the friends believed it was, nor what Job in his despair feared it was” (p. 125). It is not a safe place, but neither is it governed by chaos or cruelty. Job is ultimately moved to acknowledge God’s sovereignty on new terms, recognizing that it includes forces that are indifferent and even dangerous to humanity. Creation is a theological issue, not a scientific issue. Theology is the only source from which we have any information about creation. Any study of creation must come in the framework of theology because it is a word from God. Theology, by the way, used to be called the queen of the sciences. It was called the queen of the sciences because in the final analysis the ultimate reigning truth is theology. Biblical theology, the revelation of God in Scripture, trumps all other sources of information and knowledge. And so, for centuries creation was a theological issue, not a scientific one. And th