

The proud OSTRICH

in Job 39:13-18 **was** / is ...

- 39:13** The wings of **the ostrich** wave proudly, but are her wings and pinions like the kindly stork's?
39:14 For she leaves her eggs on the ground, and warms them in the dust;
39:15 She forgets that a foot may crush them, or that a wild beast may break them.
39:16 She treats her young harshly, as though they were not hers; her labor is in vain, without concern,
39:17 Because God deprived her of wisdom, and did not endow her with understanding.
39:18 When she lifts herself on high, she scorns the horse and its rider.

acting like

a proud sinner (39:13, 18)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

an individual

rather than a flock

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

clear evidence

of the Fall (39:13)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

contrasted with

the kindly stock (39:13)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

created

with limitations (39:17)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

**

described

mostly negatively

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

**

like and unlike

other flightless birds

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Descriptive



Meditation

proud of her speed (39:18)

more sinful than

other animals (39:13, 41:34)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

not learning

from experience (39:17)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

not living

in an ideal world

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

part of God's

rebuke and counseling

(fill in the blank)

**

probably not

Job's favorite bird (39:27)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

scorning

the horse & rider (Job?)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

theological

in a special way

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

to be studied

naturally & morally

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

well-known

in ancient Arabia

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Directions: after reading through **Job chapter 39** and some website articles on the ostrich, consider and discuss the way the ostrich is described above. **Do you agree with the points made? Would you change or add to them in any way? At the end, discuss the most important descriptive phrases and make applications.** In this, think about why the ostrich is included in God's long counseling session with Job in chapters 38 through 41 and why she is described so negatively. How was / is the ostrich like Job and like us? — © 2023 by Jon F. Mahar, Hakusan City, Japan.

Why are there so many animals and birds in Job?

Since Job lived in the ancient world before the first Scriptures were written and compiled by Moses, in chapters 38 through 41 God used creation to counsel and correct him. Though Job was the Lord's servant and mostly correct about many things, he had gone too far in some of his statements. So he needed to be reminded that the Creator gives wisdom and understanding to his creatures and he sees fit (39:17).

Why is the ostrich included in Job chapter 39?

All the animals and birds in chapter 39 were well known to Job who probably lived in ancient Arabia. Perhaps the ostrich stood out in Job's memory because he had vainly chased such a great bird on horseback (38:18) and had seen many crushed ostrich eggs (39:15). Undoubtedly, Job agreed with the Creator on the ostrich acting like an ignorant but proud person, and it was probably not his favorite bird.

Are animals and birds sinful?

The Fall of man brought many harmful changes to the animal world (Rom. 8:19-23) so that animals and birds no longer fulfill God's original peaceful purpose. During the future millennial reign of Christ the original order will be restored (See Isaiah 11:6-9 and the final study in this text.), but until then the ostrich will continue to act carelessly and proudly while birds of prey will continue to suck up blood (39:30). Though instinctively selfish and cruel behavior by animals and birds is not equivalent to human sin, it is the result of the Fall and helps illustrate the nature of human sin including that of Job. Thus natural ostrich behavior was and continues to be a fitting illustration of ignorance and pride.

Was Job really so bad?

Job's three friends were very wrong about the cause of Job's suffering (42:7), but only three verses in the final chapter deal with their error (42:7-9). However, four chapters with 129 verses (38:1-41:34) report God dealing with Job's attitude. Regarding the truth, Job was far better than his friends. Yet as a created being it was wrong for Job to challenge the Creator as he did. Though Job was the Lord's servant (42:7, 8), he should have been more submissive and silent (40:1-5, 42:1-6). So God dealt with him about his less-than-perfect attitude. The long probing session of personal counseling in Job chapters 38 through 41, including the six verses on the ostrich in chapter 39, show that God cared deeply about the attitude, especially the humility, of his servant.

What is the application?

Ideally we should not be like the ignorant yet proudly independent ostrich, but being less so in daily life must begin by admitting that we, like Job, are in fact like the ostrich. Though an individual may not boast in his or her running ability compared to others as the ostrich seemed to do (39:18), each of us naturally tries to find something in which to excel in order to boost our self-esteem. This is self-centered and wrong.