

## The Storm Job 37

As we ended chapter 36 of Job, Elihu extolled the greatness of God. He wanted Job to understand how great God was – all of the ways in which God worked and moved that men simply cannot comprehend. The point Elihu was trying to make to both Job and his friends is that God is greater than we can imagine. Therefore we shouldn't pretend that we understand everything about Him. Job's friends have toyed with the idea that they know exactly what is going on in Job's life. Elihu is rebuking that idea.

In chapter 37, we see the final words of Elihu. Here, he doubles down on the idea of God's greatness and majesty. His actions are greater and far beyond the actions of man. When we question our situation, in effect we are questioning God and Elihu desires to remind us that God's ways are greater. We not understand them – often we won't – but we can trust that God's actions will be just and righteous.

### I. A Storm Is Approaching

At the end of our time in chapter 36, I told you that it surely appeared as though a storm was approaching. Elihu spent a few moments speaking of clouds, rain, and thunder. One could certainly argue that Elihu was simply using these as a metaphor or descriptor of God's greatness and might but as we enter chapter 37, I would have to disagree with that argument. Look at the first two verses:

*My heart pounds at this and leaps from my chest. Just listen to his thunderous voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth.*

It is hard not to get the sense that this thunder is actually taking place. Elihu calls on Job to listen to this thunderous voice and rumbling (a poetical way to describe thunder). Surely, Elihu wouldn't call on Job to listen to something that only Elihu can hear in his own head! He does want Job to listen to him right? It would make no sense for him to begin acting like a crazy man – then Job surely wouldn't listen. I have to believe that an actual storm is approaching! This is really happening.

Another piece of evidence that points us in this direction is the words of Job 38:1. If we jump ahead, we see that God is going to speak to Job from a whirlwind. Whirlwinds normally appear as the result of a strong storm. Perhaps this approaching storm that Elihu is referencing in both chapters 36 and 37 leads us to the appearance of God himself that ends this book.

If you can put yourself in this situation as you read – this is a highly dramatic moment!

### II. The Great Things of God

Elihu again is reminding Job of the greatness of God – of His ways in which we cannot comprehend. He draws Job's attention to the thunder and the lightening. Again, I tend to believe that it is on full display here and Elihu can actually point to it.

The thunder and lightning that they are seeing is at different times on display all throughout the earth. As Elihu puts it, "it is on display beneath the entire sky." God's powerful display knows no boundaries. The thunder is roaring and the lightning is not restrained. It is interesting how the two are combined.

Have you ever watched a storm? If you watch lightning, thunder will soon follow. As a child you are

taught to count the seconds between the lightning strike and the roaring of the thunder in order to determine how close the storm is to your location. I'm not sure of the accuracy of that but the point is that thunder and lightning always appear together. Elihu is making the point that God's voice and God's power are one and the same. He calls this a wondrous thing, something that we are incapable of fully comprehending.

He goes on to mention the snow and the rain. These are things that we tend to take for granted but both put on the full display of the power of God. Snow is beautiful and majestic and at the same time extremely difficult to forecast. A change of one degree makes all the difference as to whether you get snow or rain and yet God is in complete control of both. He tells it when to snow and where to snow. He tells it when to rain and where to rain – also how much to rain – gentle or hard. In our climate we have seen all of the above.

The point that I believe Elihu is trying to make here is that God is sovereign and magnificent. He is in control of all down to the finest detail. Something we struggle to grasp.

### III. His All Encompassing Authority

Elihu continues pointing to God's control over nature. He does so to point to God's majesty from several different angles. Yes, God can control nature in ways that we cannot comprehend, but doing so demonstrates His complete authority. Verses 7 and 8 are of particular interest here and again Elihu's point is well made in the midst of an actual storm.

Verse 7 speaks of the effect of such storms on mankind. Once again, what you glean from this verse may very well depend on the English translation you are using. Some state that God's control over the thunder, lightning, snow, and rain, fully displays his power and authority to all of mankind. The CSB translation says that these things "serve as his sign to all mankind, so that all men may know his work." There certainly is truth to that statement but it is interesting what the King James translation says – "HE seaeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know His work." The main idea is the same, that God's work makes it very clear to mankind who is in charge. However, in this translation the implication is that God's work has the ability to pause the work of man. I believe that this translation is a bit more powerful and more than likely more accurate.

Isn't it true that mankind tends to believe they have it all figured out and are in control of things when the reality is that mankind isn't in complete control of anything. How often does rain change our plans? How often does snow change our plans? It happens all the time and Elihu is simply telling us that God is the one that is really in control.

This idea moves beyond mankind and also into the animal world. In verse 8, Elihu states that the wild animals enter their lairs and stay in their dens. These animals know exactly what is going on and the power of the weather can easily change their plans. It's interesting that science and experience has shown that animals tend to have a sense of when a disaster of nature is going to strike such as a storm or an earthquake – somehow they know exactly what is about to go do or at the very least that it isn't

going to be good and they do exactly as Elihu says – they run to safety in order to wait it out or attempt to survive.

God is in complete control.

#### IV. God's Purposes

Not only does God have complete authority but He uses that authority to accomplish a variety of purposes. Elihu has spoken of rain storms and snow storms and now he moves to ice and its power. It is apparent that God controls all from all directions – North, South, East, and West. He controls all of these processes from beginning to end. He saturates the clouds and spreads his lightning throughout and all move at his direction.

Why? To accomplish His direction. Have you really stopped to think about this on the level of a storm? I'm sure in the big picture we recognize that God acts with purpose but do we really believe that down to the finest detail. That is what Elihu is getting at here. God has a purpose in the storm. Verse 13 tells us of these purposes.

“He causes this (the storm) to happen for punishment, for His land, or for His faithful love.

Here are three purposes of God that are fulfilled through His control of nature.

- A. He can use storms and weather for punishment. Directly, the great flood of Noah's day should come to mind. God used this worldwide flood to judge the sin in it. While God did promise to never flood the whole earth again, that does not mean that he cannot or does not still use these processes of nature to punish sin.
- B. God also uses these processes for the land. Psalm 24:1 tells us that the earth and everything in it is the Lord's. He uses the weather in order to make the land fruitful and productive.
- C. Lastly, these process of nature can be used to demonstrate the mercy and love of God. Without the rain, what does our land look like? How beautiful can a blanket of snow look in the winter? Acts 14:17 tells us that God does good by giving us rain as it produces fruitful seasons that fill our hearts with food and gladness. God most certainly use the weather to bless us and draw us back to Him.

Through all of these examples, Elihu is pointing Job to the greatness and majesty of God and to his benefit, he has the backdrop of a storm to make his arguments come to life. Next he is going to draw Job's attention to these things and demand an answer.

#### V. Elihu's Questions

We have seen Elihu as Job similar questions before but repetition is often used to make a point. What we see here is Elihu ask Job four specific questions concerning the greatness and majesty of God. The point behind these questions is to point out the frailty of man in comparison to the greatness of God.

The first question Elihu asks concerns the lightning that is most likely on display around them. Elihu asks Job – “Do you know how the lightning works? How does God direct it and make it happen?”

The simple answer is that Job doesn’t know. All he can do is marvel at it as it happens. He cannot explain it and most certainly cannot replicate it.

The second question concerns the clouds. This question is one you may have pondered as well. Elihu asks Job, “How do the clouds float in the sky?” In other words, why don’t they fall to the ground? They don’t appear to be resting on anything. We can’t hang a small object in the air let alone a giant cloud.

Once again, Job has no answer. He cannot explain how God hangs the clouds. He cannot explain how they release rain. He cannot explain how they move at the direction and pace that they do. Also, just as with the lightning, Job cannot explain these things let alone replicate/demonstrate them.

As if these questions are not enough, Elihu throws somewhat of an insult into the mix after this second question. While his comments may not have been intended as an insult, they certainly come across that way. At the very least they point out Job’s lack of authority and control in comparison to God.

Elihu states in verse 17, Job, when the south winds blow your clothes get hot. At first glance you may think nothing of this but I believe that this is another way for Elihu to point out that God is the one in control. This statement can easily be applied to hot or cold. Think about our own climate here. I know in the spring when I’m going to be outside on the baseball field for an extended amount of time, I want to know if there will be a south wind or a north wind (there is always a wind in Cumberland County). Why? Because the south wind will be warm and the north wind will be cold. The direction the wind blows will determine my comfort level and the amount of clothes I wear. In a sense, that is what Elihu is telling Job – you get cold or hot simply based upon which direction the wind blows. If that is the case, how could you possibly think you are in control – or should be in control – of anything? Don’t you understand who God is in comparison to you?

Elihu continues with a third question asking Job if he can help God spread out the sky. He has seen the displays of lightning and he has seen the balance of the clouds. Now Elihu wants to know if Job is capable of helping God put it all together. No doubt, Job has seen magnificent sunrises and sunsets, as well as beautiful paintings in the sky – just as we have. The reality is that we cannot recreate that beauty.

1989 Lifesavers Commercial with a sunset – “Do it again daddy” – We can’t, only God can.

The reality is that we are in the dark on these matters and that is the main idea that Elihu wants to get across to Job. If that is the case, how can we argue about justice – how can we argue that God is unjust?

Elihu’s last question is centered on mankind. He essentially asks Job if God should be told that man wants to speak. He then asks, “how can a man speak when he is so confused?”

Elihu has made it clear that God is the only one that truly understands all and is able to do/control anything. That being the case, what position is man in to question the things of God?

Does God need to be interrupted with the complaining of his creation who cannot understand or replicate the things that He does regularly and perfectly? In reality, God would be fully justified in

ending our lives as a result of such behavior and yet he doesn't due to his character. We should be extremely thankful that this is the case and take pause before we begin to question or complain of His ways.

Each of these questions point out the frailty of man in comparison to God. Humanity is weak and God is strong. He is the sovereign King of the universe and we are simply His creation.

## VI. Elihu's Conclusion

That is essentially Elihu's conclusion – that God is great and man is in no position to question His ways.

Elihu makes one final point that mankind cannot even see the sun in a cloudy sky because the clouds obstruct our view. All it takes is a small wind to move the clouds and clear the sky for us to see the sun and yet we are powerless to make that happen. Again, God is great and mankind is frail – who are we to question Him?

We cannot reach the Almighty  
Genesis 11:4 – We cannot be like God

He alone is exalted in power. This power along with knowledge of who we are should cause us to fear him and yet we can trust that He will not violate justice and righteousness. However, he does not look favorably on the prideful.

Proverbs 3:5-6

We have made it! Elihu has reached his conclusion. He has questioned Job on the greatness of God in order to provide Job with an understanding of who he is in relation to God. Now it's God's turn to speak and He will do so in the midst of this storm and what we will see is a continuation of Elihu's methods. God is going to remind Job of who He is in relation to who Job is. Something we all need a constant reminder of and we will see that next week.

## Personal Implications

1. We would do well to pause and remind ourselves of the majesty of God
2. We would do well to understand that God is in control of our days as opposed to ourselves
3. We would do well to understand that God always acts with purpose
4. We would do well to understand our position before God
5. We would do well to trust in the character of God