

Message #39

Job 37:1-24

Steven Lawson told an interesting story about Ronald Reagan. We may remember that when John Hinckley tried to assassinate President Reagan in 1981, the Vice President was George Bush. But at the time that President Reagan was shot, V.P. Bush was not present so Alexander Haig, the Secretary of State, took it upon himself to fill the leadership role. We may recall that he stepped before a live television camera and said these now famous words, "As of this moment, I am in charge here." The fact is that was not true. He was wrong. The Secretary of State is not in charge, the Vice President is (*Job*, p. 317).

That is how many people think about their world. They think they are in charge, but they are wrong. They are not in charge of anything; God is in charge of everything. He alone is sovereign, He alone reigns and He alone rules. To prove that point, all one must do is look at the weather.

Every year we hear of storms here and there. Violent showers, flooding, blizzards, tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes and droughts are something that we expect to hear about each year. But one thing we never hear is why there are these kinds of storms. Meteorologists try to make weather pattern observations to determine conditions that may cause the storm. Doppler radar and satellites monitor, record and track storms, but no one can really understand them. I have yet to hear any meteorologist say these storms, no matter what they do, display the power and majesty of God.

Even though we cannot ever determine precisely what God is doing in the storms, we can recognize and acknowledge His sovereign majesty and power. That is exactly the final point Elihu wants to make to Job before God speaks to Job.

GOD IS SOVEREIGNLY AND MAJESTICALLY AT WORK IN STORMS, AND SINCE WE DO NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT GOD IS DOING, THE THING FOR US TO DO IS TO FEAR GOD AND SUBMIT TO GOD, AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS SOVEREIGN GREATNESS AND MAJESTY.

Elihu is going to use physical storms to teach a great spiritual lesson. We don't know why God sends a specific storm to a specific area, but we do see His power and majesty and we can trust Him to protect us. God's people do survive storms and they do so in a way that leaves them standing in awe, in a fear and reverence for God.

In **verse 1**, Elihu says that storms affected his heart relationship with God. Elihu recognized the power of God by observing storms and his heart was moved to fear God. This is the way storms should affect us. It should leave us standing in awe of the power of God.

I do not know what storms you are in right now. But here is what I do know; God has sovereignly permitted that storm to be in your life. Even though we may not know why, we can maintain a fear and reverence for God. We can maintain a high and holy view of God's majesty and if we choose to do this, God will eventually bring us through it.

Now there are four main thoughts that Elihu wanted to communicate:

THOUGHT #1 – God speaks through thunder and lightning and we cannot comprehend what He is saying. **37:2-5**

A thunderstorm is a typically short-lived storm, usually accompanied with lightning, which hits a local area.

Now here is what we do know—we know that thunderstorms produce a large portion of the annual rainfall in many areas of the world. For example, in the United States, thunderstorms provide a good percentage of moisture in places where crops grow. Beyond that, scientists don't know what a thunderstorm does.

Lightning ignites approximately 10,000 forest fires each year in the United States. Hail causes millions of dollars of crop losses each year and it is also estimated that 100 to 200 people die in thunderstorm and lightning related deaths in the United States.

Does any one actually know what God is doing? As **verses 2-5** say, He rumbles out of His mouth and the whole heaven lets loose with His lightning and His majestic voice thunders forth in ways we do not comprehend.

We have no clue as to what God is doing when that sky turns dark and the thunder roars and the lightning flashes. All we can do is stand in awe of the greatness and majesty of God.

THOUGHT #2 – God speaks through the cold snow, rain and ice and we do not know what He is saying. **37:6-10**

God determines when it snows, where it snows and how much it snows (**37:6**). When God sends His strong wintry downpours, men have to stop their work and just watch God's work (**37:7**). Animals crawl into their lairs and dens and there they remain (**37:8**). God causes storms to come out of the south and cold to come from the north (**37:9**). God causes the ice and freezes the water (**37:10**). All men can do is watch. **No man can stop the work of God, but God can certainly stop the work of men.**

We would think that all humanity would stand in total awe of the work of God, but the truth is most don't even acknowledge God in any of these things. They call it the work of their fictitious "mother nature." Very few realize that these snow storms and ice storms display the power and majesty and the greatness of God.

Perhaps you find right now in your world that the storm clouds are very dark. Perhaps things have been icy cold in your world or some intense thunderous attack has roared against you. You stay faithful. You stand in awe of God. You worship God and honor His majesty and God will bring you through the storm. That is what Elihu wanted Job to know.

THOUGHT #3 – God controls the direction of the storms. **37:11-13**

God sends storms where He wants. He loads clouds and He sends lightning and He directs and guides that storm to the exact place He wants it. Storms do what God commands on the face of this earth.

God can use a storm for correction purposes or He can use it for caring purposes. One storm may be used by God to destroy in judgment and another may be used by Him to provide moisture for food. But whatever is happening, God controls the storm.

He controls storms and He is in storms. Perhaps you have a storm in your life right now. You are being hit from all different directions. Remember, your God is still sovereign. The God who permitted the storm can take it away. God may use the storm for correction or care, but He is in storms.

THOUGHT #4 – Men need to think about God in the times of storms. **37:14-24**

What men need to do is to develop a reverence for God and turn from their rebellion. There were several things Elihu said that men needed to do. There are six responses they should have:

Response #1 - Men should stand and think about the wonders of God when faced with a storm. **37:14**

When people who think right learn of a storm, the first thing they think about is the power of God. Truth is few rarely think this way. For example, when it starts raining hard, many people say it is raining “cats and dogs.” What in the world do cats and dogs have to do with rain? That idea comes from mythology in which a cat influenced the weather and a dog supposedly by howling influenced the wind.

Response #2 - Men should realize they do not know many things about God’s storms. **37:15-18**

If you have ever watched those who chase tornadoes, you quickly see that they have no idea as to where a storm will hit and where it will go. There are five realities men do not know about God’s storm:

(Reality #1) - They do not know how God establishes a storm. **37:15a**

(Reality #2) - They do not know how God makes lightning in a cloud. **37:15b**

(Reality #3) - They do not know how God layers thick clouds. **37:16a**

(Reality #4) - They do not know why God heats the land with a south wind. **37:17**

(Reality #5) - They do not know how God spreads out the sky. **37:18**

God is perfect in knowledge and does wondrous things and men do not even begin to know what God is doing.

Response #3 - Men should ask God to instruct them what to say in the midst of the storms. **37:19**

God needs to teach us what to say when we are in a storm, because frankly, we are so dark in our perspective we have no idea what God is doing. We are in the dark about so many things, especially when we are in storms and we need to ask God for wisdom.

Response #4 - Men should be silent before God in the midst of the storms. **37:20**

One thing that man should not do is to start shooting off his mouth in the midst of storms when he doesn't know what he is talking about and he does not know what God is doing.

God may be using the storm to develop our fear of Him, or our patience and perseverance. He is not necessarily using the storm to swallow us up.

Response #5 - Men should realize they do not see the bright plan of God. **37:21**

When a person is in the midst of a storm, they rarely see or think about the fact that brightness and blue skies typically follow.

Mark Twain went to church and came out and it was raining and he was asked, "Do you think this rain will stop?" He said, "It always has."

Richard and Karen Carpenter used to sing "Rainy days and Mondays always get me down." Well if you aren't focused on God and see the big, bright plan of God, you will be depressed.

Most times, people are so focused on the storm that they forget that the storm will end and it will be bright again. The God who sent the storm can take the storm away and brighten things up.

Response #6 - Men should realize that God is an awesome, majestic God. **37:22-23**

There was a woman who was once flying in a jet who was sitting next to a minister during a storm. The plane was experiencing severe turbulence so she turned to the minister and said, "Can't you do something about this awful storm?" The minister said, "Madam, I am in sales, not management." The fact is God is the one who controls the storms. We don't.

There is no way that we can discover all of His ways (**37:23a**). It doesn't matter how long you live in this world or even when you live in this world. We have technology today that can do amazing things when it comes to storms. But with all of this, we still cannot discover all of the ways of God.

Around God is awesome majesty and when He sends a storm, He is exalted in power (**37:23b**).

Elihu is careful to point out that God will never use storms against those who are just and righteous. He will not do violent things to those just and righteous (**37:23b**).

So in **verse 24**, Elihu says storms should cause all of us to "fear" God. It does not matter how wise a person thinks he is; we should all fear God.

Lessons to learn in the storms of our lives:

1. God is trying to get our attention in storms.
2. Storms should cause us to recognize how powerful God is.
3. Storms should cause us to reverence and worship God.
4. Storms should cause us to realize there is much we don't know in the plan of God.
5. Storms should cause us to quiet down and trust God.