

TVC STUDY NOTES

GOD IN THE STORM

Text: Job 36:32–33; Job 37:1–24

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Job 36:32-33

32 He covers His hands with lightning, And commands it to strike.
33 His thunder declares it, The cattle also, concerning the rising storm.

Job 37:1-24

37 “At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place.
2 Hear attentively the thunder of His voice, And the rumbling that comes from His mouth.
3 He sends it forth under the whole heaven, His lightning to the ends of the earth.
4 After it a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard.
5 God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend.
6 For He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth’; Likewise to the [b]gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.
7 He seals the hand of every man, That all men may know His work.
8 The beasts go into dens, And remain in their lairs.
9 From the chamber of the south comes the whirlwind, And cold from the scattering winds of the north.
10 By the breath of God ice is given, And the broad waters are frozen.
11 Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His [c]bright clouds.
12 And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, That they may do whatever He commands them
On the face of the whole earth. 13 He causes it to come, Whether for correction, Or for His land, Or for mercy.
14 “Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. 15 Do you know when God [f]dispatches them, And causes the light of His cloud to shine?
16 Do you know how the clouds are balanced, Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?
17 Why are your garments hot, When He quiets the earth by the south wind?
18 With Him, have you spread out the skies, Strong as a cast metal mirror?
19 “Teach us what we should say to Him, For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.

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20 Should He be told that I wish to speak? If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up.

21 Even now men cannot look at the light when it is bright in the skies, When the wind has passed and cleared them.

22 He comes from the north as golden splendor; With God is awesome majesty.

23 As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him; He is excellent in power, In judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress.

24 Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart.”

Job 36:32–33 flows directly into Job 37. The book of Job wrestles with one of life’s oldest and hardest questions: How do we understand God when we do not understand what God is doing or what He is allowing? Job has suffered the loss of his children, his possessions, his health, and much of the life he once knew. His three friends have spent much of the book trying to explain his suffering, often assuming that Job must have done something wrong to deserve what has happened to him.

By the time we reach chapters 36 and 37, a young man named Elihu is speaking. “Elihu was a younger observer of Job’s conversation with his three friends who, after respectfully listening to the older men, stepped forward to offer his understanding of Job’s suffering and the character of God.” Unlike the others, Elihu turns Job’s attention away from trying to explain every detail of his suffering and toward the greatness, wisdom, and sovereignty of God.

As Elihu comes to the end of his speech, he apparently draws Job’s attention to the world around him. Beginning in Job 36:32–33 and continuing throughout chapter 37, the imagery becomes dominated by lightning, thunder, rain, snow, wind, clouds, cold, and heat. Elihu is describing a storm, but he is also teaching theology through the storm. Nature becomes his classroom, the storm becomes his illustration, and God becomes the subject of the lesson.

Elihu’s point is that the God who controls the storm can be trusted even when life feels out of control.

That is really the tension of the text: Job wants an explanation, but Elihu points him toward revelation. Before Job can understand what God is doing, he needs a greater understanding of who God is.

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Elihu therefore challenges Job:

"Listen to this, O Job; stand still and consider the wondrous works of God." — Job 37:14

1. God Controls What We Cannot Control - Job 36:32; 37:3, 6

36:32 - *"He covers His hands with lightning, And commands it to strike."*

37:3 - *"He sends it forth under the whole heaven..."*

37:6 - *"For He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth'..."* — 37:6

The storm may appear out of control, but it is never out of God's control.

Lightning goes where He permits. Rain falls at His command. Snow comes at His direction. Winds move under His sovereignty.

What is beyond my control is never beyond God's control.

That is important for Job because his life feels chaotic. Elihu reminds him that chaos from our perspective does not mean God has lost control.

2. As Creatures, We Can Learn Much From Creation

V33 *His thunder declares it, The cattle also, concerning the rising storm.*

Even cattle sense that a storm is approaching.

Before the storm fully arrives:

Elihu is saying that there are signs in creation that testify to God's activity and power.

3. God's Voice Should Get Our Attention Job 37:1-5

V1 - *"At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place.*

V2 - *"Hear attentively the thunder of His voice..."*

Elihu describes thunder as the voice of God. He isn't saying that every clap of thunder contains a verbal message from God. Rather, creation declares God's greatness.

Before he talks about understanding God, he talks about reverencing God.

Sometimes we become so familiar with God that we lose our sense of awe.

The greatness of God ought to produce reverence in us.

Psalm 29 gives a similar picture: *"The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty."*

Psalm 19 - *1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.*

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4. Sometimes God Stops Our Work So We Can See His Work - Job 37:6-7

V7 - "He seals the hand of every man, That all men may know His work."

Heavy rain and snow could stop people from working. When man's hands stop working, man has an opportunity to recognize what God is doing.

Sometimes God interrupts our activity to get our attention.

We are often so busy with our work that we fail to notice His work.

God sometimes allows interruptions that force us to recognize our limitations and His activity.

5. God Has a Purpose for Every Storm - Job 37:11-13

Verse 13 may be the theological heart of the passage.

V13 - "He causes it to come, Whether for correction, Or for His land, Or for mercy."

Elihu gives three possible purposes for storms:

Correction — Sometimes God uses circumstances to discipline or redirect.

For His land — Sometimes what God is doing isn't primarily about us at all. Rain may fall because the earth needs it.

For mercy — The same storm that inconveniences somebody can bring desperately needed water somewhere else.

In other words, some storms are for correction and some for perfection. Every storm is not for punishment. God's purposes can vary.

That would be exactly the mistake Job's friends have been making.

We cannot assume we know why people are going through a storm.

Sometimes it is correction. Sometimes it is provision. Sometimes it is mercy.

More than Not, we simply don't know.

6. Stop, Look and Listen - Job 37:14

V14 - "Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God."

This verse could stand by itself as the central point of the passage

Notice the progression: Listen. Stand still. Consider.

Job wants answers. Elihu tells him to first to observe God.

There are moments when faith requires us to stop demanding an immediate answer and explanation and simply contemplate who God is.

When you cannot understand God's ways, spend some time considering God's works.

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7. There Are Things God Knows That We Don't - Job 37:15–18

Elihu begins asking Job questions:

“Do you know when God dispatches them...?” — v. 15

“Do you know how the clouds are balanced...?” — v. 16

The expected answer is No.

Elihu is preparing Job for what happens in chapters 38–41, because when God finally speaks, God does essentially the same thing.

God asks Job questions about creation that Job cannot answer.

The point isn't to humiliate Job. It is to establish perspective:

There is a difference between God's knowledge and our knowledge.

If we cannot fully explain how God runs creation, we should be humble when attempting to explain why God allows everything in our lives.

Our inability to understand God does not mean God doesn't know what He is doing.

8. We Don't Always Know What to Say to God - Job 37:19–20

“Teach us what we should say to Him, For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.” — v. 19

There are experiences so confusing that we don't even know what to pray.

Faith does not require pretending that we know and understand Everything.

Sometimes the most honest prayer is: “Lord, I don't understand.”

There are times when humility before God is wiser than explanations about God.

9. God May Be Hidden Without Being Absent - Job 37:21

V21 - “Even now men cannot look at the light when it is bright in the skies, when the wind has passed and cleared them.”

Clouds can temporarily hide what is still there.

That provides a beautiful picture for Job's experience.

Job cannot see what God is doing.

But God's invisibility does not mean God's inactivity.

Clouds can hide the sun, but clouds cannot remove the sun.

Likewise, circumstances may block our view of God, but just know that God is still there.

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11. God Is Greater Than Our Ability to Understand Him - Job 37:23

V23 - "As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him; He is excellent in power, In judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress."

This brings Elihu's argument toward its conclusion.

God is: Excellent in power. Perfect in judgment. Abundant in justice.

Elihu's conclusion is not, "I can explain everything God is doing."

His conclusion is essentially this, "Job, I cannot explain everything God is doing either—but I know something about who God is."

That's an important distinction.

When we don't understand God's hand, we can still trust His character.

12. The Proper Response to God's Greatness Is Reverence - Job 37:24

The chapter ends:

V24 - Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart."

After all the lightning, thunder, rain, snow, wind, clouds, questions, mystery, power, and sovereignty, Elihu arrives at one conclusion:

Fear God! Not merely terror, but awe, reverence, humility, and recognition of God's greatness.

All of what Elihu said to Job was getting Job ready for God to speak to Him in chapter 38.

V1, "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind..."