

Job Chapter 37

Job 37:1 "At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place."

That is, in view of the thunderstorm, for it is that which Elihu is describing. This description was commenced in (Job 36:29), and is continued to (Job 37:5), and should not have been separated by the division into chapters. Elihu sees a tempest rising. The clouds gather, the lightning's flash, the thunder rolls, and he is awed as with the conscious presence of God."

"Is moved out of his place": Leaps and beats excessively, as if it would leap out of my body.

The last lesson ended with a terrible storm that even frightened the cattle. This was a storm that God had sent. This lesson picks up in the middle of the storm. The storm was as frightening to man as it had been to the cattle. Mankind has never learned to control storms. Storms are actions of God, not man.

Verses 2-13: Elihu reemphasized his main point: God uses the storms to show favor or wrath.

Job 37:2 "Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound [that] goeth out of his mouth."

Of the voice of God in the clouds; and of thunder, which is his voice (Job 40:9). Elihu being affected with it himself, exhorts the company about him to hearken and listen to it, and learn something from it (see Psalm 29:3-9).

God spoke to Moses and the people thought it thundered. It is not unusual for the voice of God to be spoken of as thunder. That is not the voice of God necessarily, but sometimes the thunder is manifest as His voice. God speaks in a still quiet voice at other times. His voice fits the occasion, as His actions do. Elihu was just saying, here, they should listen carefully to everything God had to say.

Job 37:3 "He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth."

The reverberations of the thunderclap roll along the entire cloud-canopy, from one end of the heavens to the other, beginning often faint in the distance, then growing loud over our heads, finally sinking into low muttered rumblings on the far horizon.

"And his lightning unto the ends of the earth": Similarly, the lightning, though originating in a flash at some definite spot, sets the whole sky aglow, shining from side to side of the heavens, and, as it were, to the very "ends of the earth." Both have a character of universality which is marvelous, and which makes them fitting emblems of him of whom they are the messengers and ministers (see Matt. 24:27).

Lightning and thunder seem to cover the entire heavens in a very bad storm.

Job 37:4 "After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard."

I.e. after the lightning. The lightning flash always precedes the thunder.

"With the voice of his excellency": Or, with his excellent, or high, or lofted voice, both loud and full of majesty and awfulness.

"And he will not stay; or, delay. Hebrew; take them by the heel, as Jacob did Esau in the womb, to delay or stop him from entering into the world before him.

"Them when his voice is heard": Either: The lightning spoken of in the beginning of the verse. But these do not stay till his voice be heard, but come before it. Or rather, the rains and storms, of which he spoke before, and will speak again (Job 37:6).

The thundering seems to follow the lightning by a few seconds. Some people believe you can tell how far away the lightning struck something on the ground, by the length of time between the lightning flash and the time they hear the thunder. No one can be in a thunder storm of great magnitude, and not be in awe of God. It was God who started the thunderstorm, and it must be God who stops it.

Verses 5-13: He described God's power expressed in the cold winter. The storms and the hard winters remind us of the world in which harsh things occur, but for God's good purposes of either "correction" or "lovingkindness" (37:13).

Job 37:5 "God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend."

In finishing off his description of the thunderstorm, Elihu dwells upon its marvelousness. Each step in the entire process is strange and wonderful, beyond man's comprehension. And the lesson to be drawn from the consideration of the whole series of phenomena is that:

"Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend": Even after all that has been done of late years to advance the science of meteorology, it cannot be said that the rationale of storms is fully grasped by the scientific intellect.

Elihu was in awe of the thunderstorm, and realized how marvelous the workings of God were. He also realized that this was beyond the comprehension of mankind.

Job 37:6 "For he saith to the snow, Be thou [on] the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength."

By his powerful will the snow is formed in the air, and falls upon the earth where and when he sees fit.

"Likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength": That is, God says to these as to the snow, be upon the earth. And they presently are, whether lesser or larger showers.

Snow is a mystery to all people, and especially the Orientals, since they see so little snow. I have been told that no two snowflakes are identical. God is in control of all rain, great or small. He also determines whether sleet or snow falls. All the elements of nature are at the command of Almighty God.

Job 37:7 "He seaeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work."

In the winter season, when the snow falls, and the heavy rains pour down (verse 6). God "seaeth up the hand of every man;" i.e. puts an end to ordinary out-of-doors labor, and establishes a time of pause or rest. He does this with the object:

"That all men may know his work": I.e. that, during the time of their enforced idleness, men may have leisure for reflection, and may employ it in meditating upon him and his marvelous "work."

The hand symbolizes work. To seal the hand would be to stop the work then. Perhaps this Scripture, coupled with the one before could mean that during snow time very little work is done.

Job 37:8 "Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places."

And not man only, but the beasts likewise, have to take refuge in their dens and coverts.

"And remain in their places": Until the snow and rains are finished.

Many animals hibernate when the snow is on the ground. The bear is a good example of that.

Job 37:9 "Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north."

Hebrew: Out of the inner chamber; as the southern part of the world is called, because in a great part it was and is hid and unknown to those who live in the northern hemisphere, in which Job's habitation lay. Or, out of the chambers of the south, as it is more largely expressed (Job 9:9); for this is opposed to the north in the following clause.

"Cometh the whirlwind": Violent and stormy winds which in those parts most frequently came out of the south, whence they are called whirlwinds of the south (Zech. 9:14; see Isa. 21:1).

"And cold out of the north": That is, cold and freezing winds, which generally come from that quarter. "From one quarter of the heavens blow turbulent winds; and, from the opposite quarter, those cold blasts, which clear and purify the air again."

This was a statement of the laws of nature that God set into motion. The south and the southwest are where many tornados come from. This whirlwind above, was speaking of a very violent storm.

Job 37:10 "By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened."

(Compare Psalm 147:16-18). "The breath of God," which is a metaphor for the will of God, causes alike both frost and thaw.

"And the breadth of the waters is straitened": Or, congealed. A broad expanse of water is suddenly turned by frost into a stiff and solid mass.

In this particular instance, breath possibly means the will of God. It is God who brings the frost, and it is God who makes it thaw.

Job 37:11 "Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud:"

The earth; by causing the clouds first to receive, and then to convey to distant parts, and afterward to pour forth, abundance of water.

"He wearieth the thick clouds": Alluding to men's being wearied with carrying burdens, travelling, and labor. By filling and burdening them with much water, and making them go on long journeys to water remote countries. And at last to spend and empty themselves there, he as it were, wearies and fatigues them.

"He scattereth his bright cloud": As for the white and lightsome clouds, he scattereth and dissolves them by the wind or sun. But here also the Hebrew will easily admit a different translation. If we consider *beri*, here rendered by watering, as being one word, derived from *barah*, signifying serenity. The meaning is, Fair weather also disperses the cloud; his sun scattereth the cloud abroad.

In the very dry countries of the desert, it is very important to have rain to make the crops grow. It is said that God sends the rain in due season to His children.

Job 37:12 "And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth."

"It" (i.e. the cloud) is "turned round" (or directed in its course), "by his counsels." Or under the guidance of his wisdom, and so conveys his rain wherever he pleases.

"That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth": There is no expressed antecedent to "they." Perhaps the showers are intended, or the atmospheric influences generally.

We discussed that God is in control of all of nature. Everything and everyone was created by God. The creation must obey the commands of its Creator.

Job 37:13 "He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy."

God has different purposes in directing the rain here or there. Sometimes his object is to punish by violent or excessive rainfall: sometimes it is to fertilize his own land; sometimes it is out of kindness to men generally.

God uses different amounts of rain to bless or to punish. It was God who caused the flood in Noah's time. He repented that He had made man. He saved Noah and his family because Noah pleased God.

Verses 14-18: These words picture the scene in the sky when the storms and winters have passed, the sunlight breaks through, the warm wind blows and the sky clears.

Job 37:14 "Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God."

Consider the marvels of God's works in nature, as I have set them forth to thee (Job 36:27-33; 37:2-13). The mysteries of evaporation, of cloud formation and accumulation, of thunder, of lightning, of snow and frost, of genial showers and fierce downpours, of summer and winter, of the former rain and the latter, of the gentle breeze and the whirlwind. And then say if you comprehend the various processes, and can explain them, and make others to understand them (verse 19). If not, should you not own, as we do, that "we cannot find him out" (verse 23)? Cannot reach to the depths of his nature, and therefore are unfit to pronounce judgment on his doings?

Elihu had said all of this to prove to Job that everything was in the control of God. He wanted Job to believe that God sent his problems to him, because he was out of fellowship with God. We have said so many times in these lessons that was not the reason at all for Job's problems. In fact, the opposite was true. Job's problems came, because he followed God so closely.

Job 37:15 "Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?"

The clouds, that part of the wondrous works of God he was speaking of; when he decreed concerning them that they should be, when he put into them and stored them with rain, hail, snow, etc. Disposed of them here and there in the heavens, and gave them orders to fall on this or another spot of ground. Were you present at all this, and knew what God was doing secretly in the clouds, and before heard what would break out of them, or fall from them? And if you are ignorant of these things, can you imagine that you should be made acquainted with the secret springs of God's providential dealings with the children of men?

"And caused the light of his cloud to shine": Either the lightning to break through the cloud, or rather the light of the sun to shine upon his cloud. The light reflected from it forms the rainbow. Which, as it is called his bow, the cloud in which it is may be called his cloud. Which is one of the wondrous works of God, and is called by the Heathens the daughter of wonder; usually seen as a semicircle with various colors. And as a token that God will drown the earth no more. An emblem of the covenant of peace, and of Jesus Christ, said to be clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow about his head (Rev. 10:1).

His word to Job was that he could not know when God gave the command for any of these things.

Job 37:16 "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?"

How God does as it were, weigh and suspend the clouds in balances. So that although they are ponderous and full of water, yet they are by his power kept up in the thin air from falling down upon us in spouts and floods. As sometimes they have done, and generally would do, if not overruled by a higher Providence.

"Which is perfect in knowledge": Who exactly knows the weight? These are effects and evidences of his infinite power and knowledge.

The answer is no. He knew God and His perfect ways, and that was enough for mere man to know. Job nor anyone else, does not know the workings of God in the clouds.

Job 37:17 "How thy garments [are] warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south [wind]?"

Do you even know how it is that, while the breeze from the north chills you (verse 9-10), the breath from the south makes you feel your garments are too warm? If you cannot explain a physical matter, wherein your own comfort is concerned, how much less can you comprehend the workings of God in his moral universe!

The wind from the north is cold and from the south is warm. We do not know why, only God can give that answer. We could say that is part of the law of nature that God established for the earth.

Job 37:18 "Hast thou with him spread out the sky, [which is] strong, [and] as a molten looking glass?"

Were you his co-worker or assistant in spreading out the sky like a tent or canopy over the earth? Or can you spread out such another sky? Then indeed you may with some color pretend to be privy to his counsels, and to judge of his works.

"Which is strong": Which though it be very thin and transparent, yet is also firm, and compact, and steadfast, and of great force when it is pent up.

"As a molten looking glass": Made of brass or steel, as the manner then was.

Elihu was making slight remarks to Job. He was insinuating that Job thought he knew as much as God. Job had never said any such thing.

Verses 19-20: What would Job do if he got his wish for an audience with God? Elihu had little expectation that this would ever happen.

In this passage Elihu reminded Job that since man can't explain the wonders of God's power and purpose, he ought to be silent and not contend with God. What a man has to say against God's plans is not worthy to utter and could bring judgment.

Job 37:19 "Teach us what we shall say unto him; [for] we cannot order [our speech] by reason of darkness."

Elihu indulges in irony. If you are so wise as you pretend to be, then be pleased to "teach us." We acknowledge our ignorance.

"For we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness": Enlighten us, if you can.

He was speaking in an insulting way to Job. He said, if you are so smart, why do you not teach us? You claim to be in the light, and we must have our understanding darkened. He had no idea how true his statement really was.

Job 37:20 "Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up."

Hebrew; that I will speak. Shall I send, or who dare carry, a challenge from me to God? Or a message that I am ready and desirous to debate with him concerning his proceedings? This indeed you have done in effect, but far be such presumption from me.

"If a man speak": If a man should be so bold and venturesome to enter the lists with God.

"Surely he shall be swallowed up": With the sense of God's infinite majesty and spotless purity.

No one had to tell God what Elihu had said. God had heard every word. Elihu said, if a man spoke directly to God, he would be killed.

Verses 21-23; Elihu illustrated the folly of telling God what to do by describing staring into the golden sun on a brilliant day (verses 21-22). We can't confront God in His great glory; we are not even able to look at the sun He created (verse 21).

Job 37:21 "And now [men] see not the bright light which [is] in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them."

Rather, and now men cannot behold the light which is bright in the skies. Now, i.e., here in this world, men cannot look straight at the sun, since he dazzles them. How much less then, would they be able to face God on his throne in heaven! Yet this is what Job had proposed to do (Job 9:32-35; 13:18-22; 22:3-7).

"But the wind passeth, and cleanseth them": Rather, when the wind passes and clears them; i.e. when, the wind having swept away the clouds and cleared the sky the sun shines forth in all its splendor.

The Light of God is so great it outshines the sun. A person cannot look directly at the sun without damaging his eyes. If the Light of God is stronger than the light of the sun, you could see the impossibility of seeing it directly. That Light cleanses everything.

Job 37:22 "Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God [is] terrible majesty."

Or "gold", which some understand literally": This being found in northern climates as well as southern. Particularly in Colchis and Scythia, which lay to the north of Palestine and Arabia. And is thought by a learned man to be here intended. Though to understand it figuratively of the serenity of the air, bright and pure as gold, or of fair weather.

"With God is terrible majesty": Those glorious works of his, which I have described, are testimonies of that great and terrible majesty which is in him. Which should cause us to fear and adore him, and not to behave ourselves so irreverently and insolently toward him as Job hath done.

Elihu made a correct observation. Cold weather comes from the north, and generally speaking, fair weather does too. The majesty of God is beyond the comprehension of man. He is indeed a mighty God.

Job 37:23 "[Touching] the Almighty, we cannot find him out: [he is] excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict."

This is the "conclusion of the whole matter." God is inscrutable, and man must hide his face before him and not presume to judge him. He is also excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice. His moral perfection is on a par with his might and majesty.

"He will not afflict": Rather, he will not answer; i.e. he will not account to men for his doings, or condescend to justify himself in their eyes. His acts cannot but be righteous.

Part of Elihu's statement was true. We cannot find Him out. He is all Power and Judgement and Justice. He does afflict however. The tenth plague on Egypt was a very good example of that, when all the firstborn of Egypt died. God does not have to answer to man for the actions He takes.

Job 37:24 "Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any [that are] wise of heart."

“He respecteth not any”: God is the Righteous Judge who will not take a bribe or perform favors in judgment. Thus, in his concluding speech, Elihu had pointed both Job and the reader up to God, who was ready, at last, to speak (38:1).

All of mankind should fear and respect the God that made them. No man is capable of coming against God. We are nothing compared to His Wisdom, Strength, and Majesty. God should receive our greatest respect. He does not have to answer to man.

Job Chapter 37 Questions

1. What was going on when this chapter begins?
2. What was Elihu telling Job to listen attentively to?
3. Lightning and thunder seem to come from where?
4. The thunder seems to follow the lightning by a few _____.
5. How do some people measure how far the lightning is away?
6. Elihu was in awe of the _____.
7. What is interesting about snowflakes?
8. All the elements of nature are at the command of _____.
9. The hand symbolizes _____.
10. To seal the hand would be to stop the _____.
11. When do animals hibernate?
12. The whirlwind comes out of the _____.
13. Cold comes out of the _____.
14. Breath, in verse 10, possibly, means the _____ of _____.
15. What is very important in the very dry countries of the desert?
16. The creation must obey the _____.
17. What does God use different amounts of rain for?
18. What did Elihu tell Job to do in verse 14?

19. What caused Job's problems?
20. What is the answer to verse 16?
21. What answer does the author give for the south wind being warm?
22. What was Elihu insinuating in verse 18?
23. What was he saying to Job in verse 19?
24. Who told God what Elihu said?
25. The Light of God is so bright, it outshines the _____.
26. What part of verse 23 is true?
27. Who should fear and respect God?