



Job - Chapter Thirty Seven

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Summary of Chapter Thirty Seven

Elihu continues to set forth the wisdom and omnipotence of God, as manifested in the thunder and lightning (vv.1-5); in the snows and frosts (vv.6-8); in various meteorological wonders; and shows the purpose for which they are sent (vv.9-13). Job is exhorted to consider the wondrous works of God in the light, in the clouds, in the winds, in heat and cold, in the formation of the heavens, and in the changes of the atmosphere (vv.14-22). He concludes his speech with the perfections of God and how he should be revered by all of creation (vv.23-24).

- 1 'At this also my heart trembles,
and leaps out of its place.
- 2 Listen, listen to the thunder of his voice
and the rumbling that comes from his mouth.
- 3 Under the whole heaven he lets it loose,
and his lightning to the corners of the earth.

- 4 After it his voice roars;
he thunders with his majestic voice
and he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard.
- 5 God thunders wondrously with his voice;
he does great things that we cannot comprehend.

Job 37:1-5

Listen, listen to the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth. Elihu felt that Job needed a good portion of the greatness of God. It was good advice wrongly applied to Job's situation. Elihu did rightly understand that the mighty sound of thunder seems to man to be the voice of God: <<*Father, glorify your name.*' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine>> (John 12:28-30). Elihu makes repeated reference to God's voice in connection with both the audible (thunder) and visible (lightning) manifestations of a storm, through which God communicates something of his majesty.

He does great things that we cannot comprehend. This is a repetition of Elihu's theme that Job had transgressed the line that separates God and man and that Job presumed to know more than he could or should know from God. In this, Elihu was partially correct.

- 6 For to the snow he says, "Fall on the earth";
and the shower of rain, his heavy shower of rain,
7 serves as a sign on everyone's hand,
so that all whom he has made may know it.
- 8 Then the animals go into their lairs
and remain in their dens.
- 9 From its chamber comes the whirlwind,
and cold from the scattering winds.
- 10 By the breath of God ice is given,
and the broad waters are frozen fast.
- 11 He loads the thick cloud with moisture;

the clouds scatter his lightning.

¹² They turn round and round by his guidance,
to accomplish all that he commands them
on the face of the habitable world.

¹³ Whether for correction, or for his land,
or for love, he causes it to happen.

Job 37:6-13

For to the snow he says, “Fall on the earth”; and the shower of rain, his heavy shower of rain, serves as a sign on everyone’s hand, so that all whom he has made may know it. This probably refers to the way severe weather causes people to take shelter just as the animals do (v.8), and thus prevents them from working. Elihu previously spoke of God’s voice as being like mighty thunder. Now he considered that the voice of God commanded the snow, the gentle rain and the heavy rain; his breath makes ice and freezes the broad waters.

The idea is that when God sends the cold and the snow, the farmer cannot do his work. His hand is sealed from further effort and the time away from work makes him reflect on the work of God. Charles Spurgeon comments, “When the Lord seals up a man’s hand, he is unable to perform his labour. The Lord has an object in this, namely, ‘that, all men may know his work.’ When they cannot do their own work, they are intended to observe his works of God.”

He loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning. They turn round and round by his guidance, to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the habitable world. Elihu wanted Job to not only appreciate the greatness of God, but also the submission of creation. The implication was that unrepentant Job should submit to God the way his creation does.

God’s providential purposes may relate to people, i.e. for correction or for love, or may be for his land, as God himself will indicate: <<*Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain, and a way for the thunderbolt, to bring rain on a land where no one lives, on the desert, which is empty of human life, to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground put forth grass?>> (Job 38:25-27).*

¹⁴ ‘Hear this, O Job;
stop and consider the wondrous works of God.

¹⁵ Do you know how God lays his command upon them,
and causes the lightning of his cloud to shine?

16 Do you know the balancings of the clouds,
the wondrous works of the one whose knowledge is perfect,
17 you whose garments are hot
when the earth is still because of the south wind?
18 Can you, like him, spread out the skies,
unyielding as a cast mirror?
19 Teach us what we shall say to him;
we cannot draw up our case because of darkness.
20 Should he be told that I want to speak?
Did anyone ever wish to be swallowed up?

Job 37:14-20

Hear this, O Job. Elihu again appealed to Job in a very direct and personal way, more personal than the three other friends of Job had. Elihu focuses on God's majesty and calls on Job to listen and apply the weight of this description to his complaint before God, just as he had called Job to do in relation to affliction: *<<He also allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no constraint, and what was set on your table was full of fatness. But you are obsessed with the case of the wicked; judgement and justice seize you. Beware that wrath does not entice you into scoffing, and do not let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside. Will your cry avail to keep you from distress, or will all the force of your strength? Do not long for the night, when peoples are cut off in their place. Beware! Do not turn to iniquity; because of that you have been tried by affliction>>* (Job 36:16-21).

Stop and consider the wondrous works of God. Significantly, God will address Job among similar lines when God begins to speak starting at Job Chapter 38. Here, Elihu repeats the question Do you know? God will say "Surely you know?" Although Elihu here had many of the right ideas, he presented them with a wrong premise, the premise that Job's whole crisis came from his sin.

Elihu refers to God as one whose knowledge is perfect, a description he first applied to himself in offering this speech on God's behalf: *<<For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you>>* (Job 36:4).

Teach us what we shall say to him. Here Elihu confronted what he believed to be Job's arrogance in saying that man deserved an audience or a justification from God, "Job, if you insist that God owes us an audience, then please teach us what we should say to him."

- 21 Now, no one can look on the light
when it is bright in the skies,
when the wind has passed and cleared them.
- 22 Out of the north comes golden splendour;
around God is awesome majesty.
- 23 The Almighty – we cannot find him;
he is great in power and justice,
and abundant righteousness he will not violate.

Job 37:21-23

Elihu likens the light that comes after a storm has cleared (v.21) to the God who is clothed with awesome majesty (v.22), who cannot simply be found, who is extremely powerful and who does not violate what is right (v.23).

The Almighty – we cannot find him. Elihu returned to his theme of God's distance and transcendence. He wanted to discourage Job from insisting that God owed him or anyone else an audience or an explanation. Significantly, the God whom Elihu believed to be utterly beyond and unreachable by man has come in the storm and will speak to Job. It seems that God had finally heard enough of the almost-right wisdom of man and had heard enough of this talk that he was so beyond man that he was beyond reach. God was about to confront not only Job, but his three friends and especially Elihu, with both his words and his presence.

- 24 Therefore mortals fear him;
he does not regard any who are wise in their own conceit.'

Job 37:24

Elihu presents the options of responding to God's majesty in two stark categories: either people are wise and exhibit fear of God, or they are wise in their own conceit.