

Elihu Speaks to Job of God's Greatness

Job Chapter 36:23–37:24

Job 36:23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

AT the core of all rebellion is the treasonous belief that men know how to rule the earth better than God. Sinners also will not hesitate to bring charges against the Lord simply because they believe they know more than Him. Yet no mortal man, let alone a sinful man, has ever ascended so high in creation that he could counsel the Lord or ascribe any sin to Him.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 36:23) The idea is, that God is supreme and independent; no one has advised him, and no one has a right to counsel him.

Men are sinners; God is not. Men transgress against the Lord; the Lord does not sin against them. Elihu thus declares that

none have the right to say that the Lord has wrought iniquity, when in fact it is spiritually impossible for Him to do so. *The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD* (Prov. 19:3).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Prov. 19:3) A man's own self-will (Proverbs 1:7)¹ overturns his way, stops his progress, whether in temporal or spiritual matters, and then, instead of blaming himself, "his heart fretteth against the Lord." (Comp. Isaiah 8:21; Revelation 16:10–11.²)

Martha blamed Lazarus' death on the fact that Jesus was not there during his sickness.³ Israel blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt.⁴ Ahab blamed and hated Micaiah because he prophesied only evil concerning him.⁵ The point is that the righteous will often be blamed and accused of wrongdoing when in fact

1 Prov. 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

2 Isa. 8:21 *And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.*

Rev. 16:10–11 *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

3 John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

4 Num. 20:5 *And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.*

Num. 21:5 *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.*

5 1 Kgs. 22:1–8 *And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.*

6 *And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by*

they are actually purposing to help others. It is also impossible to blame the Lord for anything unjust without directly sinning against Him—simply because it has been revealed, and is it certain, that he who unjustly blames or casts aspersions upon God sins against Him.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 36:23) Let not Job continue his unjust quarrel with God and his providence. And let us never dare to think favourably of sin, never indulge it, nor allow ourselves in it. Elihu thinks Job needed this caution, he having chosen rather to gratify his pride and humour by contending with God, than to mortify them by submitting, and accepting the punishment. It is absurd for us to think to teach Him who is himself the Fountain of light, truth, knowledge, and instruction.

Job 36:24–25 Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

²⁵*Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.*

By directing Job's thoughts to the Lord, Elihu sought to move them away from his own misery. What men think upon greatly determines the opinion they have of their situations. He also who is overly occupied with self will believe himself to be a much higher creature than he really is. Elihu's antidote to this is to direct Job's thoughts off himself and onto God. By doing this, human conceit

can be lowered and men can be brought to know the true position they hold in God's creation. It is also by beholding the Lord and His works, and not ourselves or our situations, that we have the key to true spiritual transformation: *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* (II Cor. 3:18). What men dwell upon produces the greatest degree of influence on their character. Moses' face shone after he came down from Mount Sinai because of both being in and beholding the Lord's presence. Through Moses' communion with the Lord, his own countenance and visage were actually changed. Beholding the Lord's celestial glory created a reflection on Moses' face, practically revealing his communion with the Lord. *And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him* (Exod. 34:29).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Exod. 34:29) *The skin of his face shone.*—That an actual physical phenomenon is intended appears from the entire narrative, as well as from St. Paul's comment upon it in 2 Corinthians 3:7–18.⁶ According to some commentators, a radiance like that here described was a part of man's original heritage, a feature of that "image of God" wherein he

whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

6 II Cor. 3:7–18 *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: ⁸How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? ⁹For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. ¹⁰For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. ¹¹For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. ¹²Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: ¹³And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: ¹⁴But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. ¹⁵But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. ¹⁶Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

was created (Genesis 1:27).⁷ The gift was forfeited by the fall, and will not be restored generally until the time of the restitution of all things. But meanwhile, from time to time, it pleases God to restore to certain of His saints the physical glory, which is the symbol of internal purity and holiness, as to Moses on this occasion and afterwards to Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (Luke 9:31),⁸ and to St. Stephen when he pleaded before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:15).⁹ A glory of the kind, but of surpassing brilliancy, belonged to the human nature of our blessed Lord, who concealed it ordinarily, but allowed it to appear temporarily at the transfiguration, and permanently after His ascension (Revelation 1:16; Revelation 10:1; Revelation 21:23; Revelation 22:5).¹⁰ The grant of the privilege to Moses was perhaps necessary to support his authority among a people of such materialistic leanings as the Israelites.

The glory of the Lord, which made Moses' face visibly shine, came after he had direct communion with God. What is also observable in this record is that though the Lord's glory radiated from Moses' face and countenance, he was at least initially unaware of it—teaching us as well that a Christian's spirituality may be observed and recognized by others, though he may himself not be conscious of it.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Exod. 34:29) *Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him*—It was an intimation of the exalted presence into which he had been admitted and of the glory he had witnessed (2Co 3:18);¹¹ and in that view, it was a badge of his high office as the ambassador of God. No testimonial needed to be produced. He bore his credentials on his very face; and whether this extraordinary effulgence was a permanent or merely temporary distinction, it cannot be doubted that this reflected glory was given him as an honor before all the people.

What a great spiritual lesson this teaches us, that those who do not know the Lord may be able, at least to a degree, see Him in the countenance and visage of those who do!¹²

Job 36:26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

An important indicator of true religion is the humble admission that there is much to know about God that we do not and cannot know during this mere earthly existence.¹³ Nowhere also is human pride more evident than when sinful men both presume and assume to know

7 Gen. 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

8 Luke 9:31 *Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

9 Acts 6:15 *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

10 Rev. 1:16 *And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

Rev. 10:1 *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:*

Rev. 21:23 *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

Rev. 22:5 *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

11 II Cor. 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

12 Matt. 5:14–16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

13 I Cor. 13:2 *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

a God, Whom in fact they are completely estranged from.

Job 36:27–28 *For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:*

²⁸ *Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.*

In truth, men do not have the power to grow or sustain anything without God providing the means through nature to have their needs met. One of the first places this is true is when rain descends from the heavens, giving life to both the plants and creatures upon the earth. Elihu thus directs Job's attention to the mystery of water in its three forms—vapor, liquid, and solid—to prompt him to consider that if even rain, the work of God, is so mysterious and wonderful, how much greater is the Lord Himself?

Job 36:29 *Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?*

Another mysterious and powerful work of God is how clouds begin small and then spread and expand, potentially becoming great and gigantic thunderstorms. Clouds are also often associated in Scripture revealing the presence of the Lord: *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne* (Ps. 97:2). It seemed to be well known, even in Job's time, that clouds covered God: *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven* (Job 22:14). It was also a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night that revealed God's presence with Israel in their long journey to the promised land: *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*

He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people (Exod. 13:21–22). A cloud also revealed the Lord's presence when He descended upon Mount Sinai: *And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness* (Deut. 4:11). Scriptures also describe Jesus as sitting upon His throne supported by a white cloud: *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle* (Rev. 14:14). By directing Job to observe the work of God concerning rain and clouds, Elihu begins the spiritual process of bringing Job to a greater awareness of the mystery that is God. If Job looked up into the heavens and observed the great wonder and mysterious nature of God's creation, then he could begin to realize that there was a mystery of God far beyond mere human and natural comprehension.

Job 36:30 *Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.*

Proceeding to enlighten Job to God's majesty and power, Elihu directs his thoughts to lightning and how it descends from the heavens and even on the darkest night illuminates the vast expanse of the sea. Like clouds, lightning is often associated with the presence and power of the Lord: *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled* (Ps. 97:4). Scripture also reveals that lightning originates, and can come from the Lord, as judgment: *Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them* (Ps. 144:6). Through the startling and fearful bolts of lightning, God conveys Himself as possessing sufficient power and authority to judge all sinners:¹⁴ *And Elijah answered*

¹⁴ Rev. 16:18 *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*

and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty (II Kgs. 1:10–12). When the temple of God is opened in the book of Revelation, flashes of lightning will be among the strong natural forces that will exhibit the Lord's presence within it: *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail* (Rev. 11:19). If men would actually consider that lightning, thunder, clouds, and rain are revelations meant to display God's glory and majesty, then they would realize that He is far closer and much more powerful than they ever imagined.

Job 36:31–33 For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

³² *With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.*

Luke 9:54 *And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?*

15 Job 1:8 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

16 Gen. 3:10 *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

Exod. 3:6 *Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*

Exod. 14:31 *And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.*

Exod. 19:16 *And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.*

Exod. 20:18–21 *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. ²⁰And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. ²¹And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.*

³³ *The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 36:31–33) *For by them he judgeth the people—*By thunder and lightning, and rain from the clouds, he executes his judgments against ungodly people. *He giveth meat—*By the same clouds by which he punisheth wicked men, he provideth plentiful showers to drop fatness upon the earth.

Other translations help to enlighten the meaning of verses 32 and 33.

(NLT) *He fills his hands with lightning bolts and hurls each at its target.*

³³ *The thunder announces his presence; the storm announces his indignant anger.*

(ESV) *He covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike the mark.*

³³ *Its crashing declares his presence; the cattle also declare that he rises.*

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

Elihu possessed a similar fear of the Lord as Job,¹⁵ if not actually greater. It is also true sight of God that produces fear of Him.¹⁶ Creation also testifies to God's

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eternal power and Godhead. *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse* (Rom. 1:20).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:20) Being understood—His perfections may be investigated, and comprehended by means of his works. They are the evidences submitted to our intellects, by which we may arrive at the true knowledge of God.

The Lord has left such a mark on the universe that it still bears ample testimony to His existence, glory, and majesty. God has determined that there is enough evidence of Himself in creation, and this prohibits any excuse for men not to yield to His sovereignty and rule over their lives.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:20) So that they are without excuse—God has given them so clear evidence of his existence and claims, that they have no excuse for their idolatry, and for hindering the truth by their iniquity. It is implied here that in order that people should be responsible, they should have the means of knowledge; and that he does not judge them when their ignorance is involuntary, and the means of knowing the truth have not been communicated. But

I Sam. 4:7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

I Sam. 12:18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

II Sam. 6:9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

Jonah 1:16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows. Dan. 10:15–17 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. ¹⁶And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Mark 9:4–6 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. ⁶For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

Luke 2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Luke 9:34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

Heb. 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

Rev. 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

17 Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

where people have these means within their reach, and will not avail themselves of them, all excuse is taken away.

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

It is extremely probable and virtually certain that while Elihu was speaking to Job about the glory of God in creation, thunder reverberated and shook the environment, both awakening and startling Job to the Lord's approaching presence. The tempest that was brewing was firm evidence that God was near and visibly not happy with what He had been observing.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 37:2) Hear attentively— ... It has been supposed by many, and not without probability, that the tempest was already seen rising, out of which God was to address Job [Job 38:1¹⁷], and that Elihu here calls the special attention of his hearers to the gathering storm, and to the low muttering thunder in the distance.

The noise of his voice—Thunder is often represented as the voice of God, and this was one of the most natural of all suppositions when its nature was little understood, and is at all times a beautiful poetic conception;

see the whole of Psalm 29:1–11.¹⁸ The word rendered “noise” (רָגַז *rôgez*), means properly “commotion,” that which is fitted to produce perturbation, or disquiet (see Job 3:17, Job 3:26; Isaiah 14:3¹⁹), and is used here to denote the commotion, or “raging” of thunder.

That Job could hear the thunder and then see the great storm containing God's presence approaching reveals two things. First, it documented God's arrival in the situation. Second, it revealed God's displeasure with both Job's person and his words. Because of this, the Lord was ready to enter into direct conversation with Job and then ultimately with Job's other three friends as well. *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said . . .* (Job 38:1). Ultimately everything that Elihu spoke to Job—including his mention of the rain, clouds, thunder, and lightning—was becoming manifest, and they would all collectively testify to the presence of God. The Lord has often confirmed His presence through powerful acts of nature, purposed to testify to the legitimacy of those sent to speak for Him. Elijah had his spiritual ministry confirmed by lightning descending from heaven,²⁰ Joshua as well had his ministry confirmed by the sun standing still, enabling him to win the battle in which he was engaged.²¹ At Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent death upon

the cross, the earth did quake and the rocks were rent,²² revealing God's displeasure with the murder of His Son. Hence, through the tempest that was approaching, Elihu's message was being confirmed as having its source in God. Elihu had spoken of the power and mystery of God manifested through creation, and now Job would be able to experience it personally.

Job 37:3–6 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

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.*

⁵ *God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

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.*

As the Lord's voice rumbled in the approaching storm, it would soon be followed by His actual spiritual presence. Indeed *he* [the Lord] *will not stay them when his voice is heard* (v. 4). Once the Lord speaks and once His voice is heard, nothing can hold back His presence from intervening in men's lives. Jesus proved this when He verbally called Lazarus out

18 Ps. 29:1–11 *Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory. The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever. The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.* Job 3:17 *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.*

Job 3:26 *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.*

Isa. 14:3 *And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,*

20 1 Kgs. 18:38 *Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

21 Josh. 10:13 *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.*

22 Matt. 27:50–51 *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;*

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of his tomb.²³ It was also Jesus' spoken Word that preceded His healing of the man with the withered hand.²⁴ Hence, once God speaks, His power, presence, and glory are ready to be revealed and will be made known.²⁵ The sound of His voice is only a precursor to the arrival of His presence.

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

Elihu now mentions God's supernatural ability over creation, to then stop men's hands from both their labor and work and/or to shut them up because of the harsh and unbearable climate around them. Thus, while men will often glory in the work of their own hands,²⁶ it takes but a small act of God's intervention in nature to reveal that His work and His hands are so much more powerful than any natural ability of man. By this demonstration of heavenly power, sinners should be able to perceive that all true power, glory, and authority belong to God and that

there is no other true governor upon the earth than Him.

Job 37:8–13 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

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

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

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

¹²And 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.

¹³He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

In reality, all acts in creation have their roots either in God's correction of men or in His mercy toward them. *He brings the clouds to punish people, or to water his earth and show his love* (Job 37:13 NIV). How shallow also are most men's thoughts when men insist on spending countless hours discussing the weather but are often

²³ John 11:43–44 *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* ⁴⁴*And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

²⁴ Matt. 12:9–13 *And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: ¹⁰And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. ¹¹And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? ¹²How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. ¹³Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.*

²⁵ Gen. 1:3 *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*
Gen. 1:6 *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*

Gen. 1:9 *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.*

Gen. 1:11 *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*

Gen. 1:14 *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

Gen. 1:20 *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.*

Gen. 1:24 *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*

Gen. 1:26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

²⁶ Isa. 2:8 *Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:*

Acts 7:41 *And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

not, even the least bit, interested in Him who rules it.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 37:13) Nature directs all creatures to shelter themselves from a storm; and shall man only be unprovided with a refuge? Oh that men would listen to the voice of God, who in many ways warns them to flee from the wrath to come; and invites them to accept his salvation, and to be happy.

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

Elihu now instructs Job to *stand still* so that he could gain quietness in his heart and begin contemplating the wondrous works of God. By his standing and ceasing from his own erring thoughts, room could be provided for Job to hear directly from the Lord. Mary also sat at Jesus' feet and remained still, subsequently receiving spiritual truth about God that anxious Martha, because of her preoccupation with other things, positioned herself to be deaf to.²⁷

Job 37:15–17 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?

¹⁶ ***Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?***

¹⁷ ***How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?***

Like cold and unforgiving weather, smothering heat likewise is able to keep men indoors and force them to cease from their activity and labor. Hence, through God's influence on nature, He can easily control even the routine movements of man.

²⁷ Luke 10:38–42 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. ⁴⁰But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴¹And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: ⁴²But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Now Elihu proposes to Job a series of questions. First, he asks if Job knows how God controls the clouds and causes the lightning to flash out of them (v. 15). Second, he inquires of Job as to whether he really knows how God balances the clouds and keeps them suspended above the earth (v. 16). Third, he asks Job if he is aware of the hot and warm wind that quiets all living creatures and demands that they take shelter until it passes (v. 17). By asking Job questions concerning creation, which Elihu knows Job has no answers for, it is hoped that he would realize that if he does not know these answers concerning creation, then how could he presume to so easily know its Creator?

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Job 37:17) *how thy garments are warm*] Rather perhaps, thou *Whose garments are warm, when the earth is still because of the south wind*. Job 37:15 referred to the storm cloud; Job 37:16–17 refer rather to the sultry summer cloud. ... "This sensation of dry, hot clothes is only experienced during the siroccos" (Thomson, *Land and the Book*). In reference to the *stillness* of the earth under such a wind, this writer says, "There is no living thing abroad to make a noise. The birds hide in thickest shades, the fowls pant under the walls with open mouth and drooping wings, the flocks and herds take shelter in caves and under great rocks, and the labourers retire from the fields and close the windows and doors of their houses.

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

Elihu now directs Job to look at the sky and all that comprises the earth's atmosphere. Hence, just as there is wonder in those things that fill up the sky, so is

there even greater wonder in beholding and marveling in the sky itself.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 37:18) Wast thou his assistant in spreading out the sky, like a canopy, over the earth? *Which is strong*—Which, though it be very thin and transparent, yet is also firm, and compact, and steadfast. *As a molten looking-glass*—Made of brass and steel, as the manner then was. Smooth and polished, without the least flaw. In this, as in a glass, we may behold *the glory of God*, and the wisdom of *his handiwork*.

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

There are many who have murmured against the Lord on earth who would be at a complete loss for words, and exceedingly fearful, if they were brought into God's presence in heaven. It is one thing for sinners to speak of God while it is thought they are outside of His presence and beyond His sight, but quite another thing to attempt to defend themselves when being personally confronted by the Lord. Could Job then do such a thing as this and properly order his words before God? Elihu knew that he could not and hoped that if given the chance, Job would wisely view himself exactly as himself.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 37:19) *Teach us what we shall say unto him*—This seems to be addressed to Job. It is the language of Elihu, implying that he was overawed with a sense of the majesty and glory of such a God. He knew not in what manner, or with what words to approach such a Being, and he asks Job to inform him, if he knew.

We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness—Job had repeatedly professed a desire to bring his cause directly before God, and to argue it in his presence. He felt assured that if

he could do that, he should be able so to present it as to obtain a decision in his favor; see Job 13:3,²⁸ note; Job 13:18–22,²⁹ notes. Elihu now designs, indirectly, to censure that confidence. He says that he and his friends were so overawed by the majesty of God, and felt themselves so ignorant and so ill qualified to judge of him and his works, that they would not know what to say. They were in darkness. They could not understand even the works of his hands which were directly before them, and the most common operations of nature were inscrutable to them. How then could they presume to arraign God? How could they manage a cause before him with any hope of success? It is scarcely necessary to say, that the state of mind referred to here by Elihu is that which should be cultivated, and that the feelings which he expresses are those with which we should approach the Creator. We need someone to teach us. We are surrounded by mysteries which we cannot comprehend, and we should, therefore, approach our Maker with profound reverence and submission.

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

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 37:20) Elihu had designed to reprove Job for the bold and presumptuous manner in which he had spoken of God, and for his wish to enter into a debate with him in order to vindicate his cause. He now says, that if anyone should attempt this, God had power at once to destroy him; and that such an attempt would be perilous to his life. But other interpretations have been proposed, which may be seen in Rosenmuller, Umbreit, and Lee.

Surely he shall be swallowed up—Destroyed for his presumption and rashness in thus contending with the Almighty. Elihu says that on this account he would not dare to speak with God. He would fear that he would come forth in his anger, and destroy him.

²⁸ Job 13:3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

²⁹ Job 13:18–22 Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified. ¹⁹Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost. ²⁰Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee. ²¹Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

²²Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

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

If men cannot even look at the brightness of the sun, then how could they possibly think they could see God, Who is Himself solely light?³⁰

(NIV) *Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.*

(Benson Commentary, Job 37:21) Men are not able to look upon the brightness of the sun when it shines in the heavens, after the winds have swept away the clouds which before obscured the clear sky. And therefore it is not strange if we cannot see God, or discern his counsels and ways.

If the sun, which is but one element of God's creation, prohibits men from gazing upon it for any length of time, how can men presume that they could see the Lord and live? *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live* (Exod. 33:20).

(Benson Commentary, Exod. 33:20) *Thou canst not see my face*—The full display of my glory, that light inaccessible, before which the angels stand, but which would be insufferable to mortal eyes; this no man can see and live.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Exod. 33:20) The impossibility of the thing from man's weakness, which is such, that if God should display all the beams of his glory to him, it would certainly astonish, overwhelm, and destroy him.

30 *I John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

Hab. 3:4 And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.

Ps. 18:2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

31 *Exod. 20:18–19 And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*

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

(Benson Commentary, Job 37:22) *Fair weather cometh out of the north*—From the northern winds, which scatter the clouds and clear the sky. Elihu concludes with some short, but great sayings, concerning the glory of God. He speaks abruptly and in haste, because, it should seem, he perceived God was approaching, and presumed he was about to take the work into his own hands.

Just as the northern wind clears the air and removes the clouds so the sun can be seen, Elihu now reveals that his time with Job is about to end. For soon the Lord will begin His own work to fully humble Job and therefore bring him into a spiritual awareness of his crimes against God. What this teaches us is that there is a time for messengers of God to speak on the Lord's behalf and another more fearful and frightening time when the Lord will speak directly for Himself. Concerning this time, Israel also cried unto Moses that they could be given a mediator, which would allow them not to have direct communion with the Almighty.³¹

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.*

Though sinners through their own efforts cannot find out God, He can find out them. In the context of the approaching storm, again Elihu asserts to Job that if nature itself is not fully understood, how could God and His ways with man be so simple to comprehend?

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

Concluding his spiritual correction, Elihu finishes his discourse with Job with this strikingly simple but yet profound spiritual truth, that God *respecteth not any that are wise of heart*. It is this lesson that is the ultimate lesson the book of Job, seeks to impart—that *he* [God] *respecteth not any that are wise of heart*. This was Job's sin, and he could not hide it from the Lord. God had heard his words and was equally aware of his thoughts,³² and Job would have to give an account for both. Like John the Baptist,³³ Elihu has now prepared the way for One greater than himself to speak and begin revealing even more heavenly revelation to Job. Elihu, God's messenger, has done his part, and now Jehovah will do His. It is thus time—as in the time of Jesus

when John prepared His way—that God will directly reveal Himself to Job, just as when the time of the prophet was past and the Son of God was ready to be revealed to the world. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight* (Mark 1:3).

(Benson Commentary, Isa. 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.) The idea is taken from the practice of the eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition, or took a journey, especially through desert and unpractised countries, sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments.

³² Job 42:2 *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

³³ John 1:27 *He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*