

AUGUST 31

Job 37-39

Job 37

Notice all of the stormy imagery. It is thought that as Elihu was speaking, they all noticed that a storm was approaching and Elihu got inspired and began to use it to describe God's power and wisdom.

Vs. 1-13 It seems Elihu became "caught up" in the emotion of this storm. He began to suggest that God knows all the ramifications of bringing a storm. He knows where the animals will be driven and where rain, snow and lightning will fall. He knows the purposes He has for the storm.

V. 9 Notice *the whirlwind*. Job lost his children to something like this.

V. 13 This is probably the key to what Elihu was driving at. It is not just that God makes it happen; it is the stated motives that guide His hand and His actions.

Vs. 14-20 This is Elihu's final challenge to Job. The argument of v. 15 goes, "If you don't know this, then what right do you have to say *what* God is doing in this situation you are in?"

Vs. 19-20 Job wanted to talk to God. Elihu is suggesting that if Job isn't wise enough to figure out what God can create with a thought, how is he going to really duke it out with God? Hooking himself up to God would be like hooking up to a zillion watts and a gazillion volts.

Vs. 21-24 Again, Elihu justifies God.

Job 38-39

Job finally got what he wanted. God arrived in the approaching storm. Notice that God speaks to Job out of the very thing that killed his kids.

God never defends His actions in allowing this to happen to Job. At this point, we are the only ones who know the whole story. What God does is describe why Job should just trust Him. To do this, as my uncle says, first God takes Job on a nature hike and then He takes him to the zoo. Isn't God's wisdom totally beyond our comprehension, how He can direct, control and sustain the entire universe and all of life? There is so much that exists that we don't even know about in the spiritual dimension, on the microscopic level, in events taking place in deep space (and what is space anyway?). And yet He doesn't even break a sweat to sustain it or create it. He holds it all together and directs it. And we know Him in the person and grace and salvation of Jesus our Lord. "Trust" is an awfully small word when we consider His work in our lives and how He uses us.

Job 38

Vs. 1-3 Oops!

Vs. 4-7 God created the earth and the sons of God were there and rejoiced. Notice too, apparently at that time all the angels rejoiced. God knew of the rebellion that would follow and that is a part of this story.

Vs. 8-11 The sea was thought to be wild, mighty and untamable, but not to God.

Vs. 12-15 Even in controlling the day, God controls the affairs of men, particularly the wicked. This is an interesting mixture of physical and spiritual realities.

Vs. 16-18 This too is a mixture. The lowest part of the earth is the ocean floor, but lower still are the gates of death.

Vs. 19-21 Light is still a mystery. An honest scientist would admit this.

Vs. 22-24 Somehow I don't think Job knows the answer to this one.

Vs. 25-30 Does the rain have a father? Not only that, the mechanism in the creation of rain is still a theory. But it's OK because God knows.

Vs. 31-33 According to Genesis, God created all of this in 24 hours and he did it for us.

Vs. 34-38 This is intricacy beyond our thinking. It is beyond Matthew 10:29, *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.* But it is all seen and understood and planned by God.

Vs. 39-41 Now God takes Job to the zoo. This probably should have been the start of chapter 39. Both the king of the beasts and a scavenger rely on God for their food, and He orders it all according to His wisdom.

Job 39

Vs. 1-4 Apparently there are particular breeds of mountain goats where this is still a mystery. God is responsible for this secret.

Vs. 5-8 I never think about wild donkeys, but God was responsible for their scorn and ranging. It was ordered by His wisdom.

Vs. 9-12 In God's wisdom, He ordained this strength and independence to remain untamed.

Vs. 13-18 In God's wisdom He made her foolish and fast. Who are we to judge?

Vs. 19-25 Not only is the horse a great domestic animal, but it has an instinct for battle. Who knew? God made the horse this way.

Vs. 26-30 And then there is the eagle, or vulture, or both. It is all in God's sovereign control.

The point in all of this is that God's infinite wisdom and intricate sovereignty are so great, that we should trust Him for what we don't understand. If we know God in Christ, we know His love, His salvation and His work on this planet of death. That should be enough for us to trust Him completely, and take up our death daily and follow Him in the harvest.

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10

In Paul's recent suffering he was overwhelmed by the emotions of certain death, and then added to this was all the distress and conflict he felt with the church in Corinth. Through that experience of suffering ("death"), the Lord gave Paul what he needed to speak to this church. That was an interesting way to prepare Paul.

2 Corinthians 4:13-18

Vs. 13-15 In order to understand this you have to read Psalm 116. Paul is quoting v. 10. It is a psalm of deliverance. I bet Paul read that over and over during this time. Paul expected the leaders and people in Corinth to understand this reference since this was a very Jewish church.

Paul is saying that he and those with him shared the same experience as the psalmist. Even though they were threatened, they still believed and went on speaking for God. Paul says here that they kept on because they knew they would be raised with Christ. Paul knew that God would use that experience, however it turned out, to bring His grace further and to bring glory to His name.

Vs. 16-18 This is very much like what Jesus told His disciples. Jesus said they shouldn't fear those who could only kill the body. It was in all of His teaching that we are to live for the kingdom and leave the rest to Him. It also reminds me of Jesus telling Peter that Peter couldn't follow Jesus "now," but that he would follow later. The destination wasn't death, but the Father's presence. The reason Peter couldn't follow was the work of redemption; but rightly understood, it gave Peter something to look forward to when his work was done.

Based on the resurrection and the spiritual reality given by God, we can risk it all for Him. Notice that the Spirit can use the suffering of today to cause daily renewal and preparation.

V. 18 This assumes that a disciple following Christ in the harvest is learning to see the spiritual. This is not automatic. Many church goers are lost on earth and do not see God working to redeem, much less see their part in it.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

This section explains vs. 16-18. The point is that the body must die, but God uses that daily process of death to produce all sorts of wonderful things. I would say though, that this process of death and renewal only really happens if our eyes are on the harvest and the eternal plan that God is working through Christ, through us, in this world.

V. 1 Notice the contrast between the tent and the house. Remember 1 Corinthians 15:42.

Vs. 2-5 It is normal for us to groan while we are in this body, but this isn't just any groaning. We all groan. The context of Paul's groaning wasn't just his arthritis; it was his work on earth for Christ and the difficulty of following Christ bearing the body of death. It is a spiritual understanding of what is happening in life, understanding this body of death and understanding that our hope is in the resurrection. Read Romans 8:23. It seems kind of funny to say this, but if a person isn't groaning inwardly, it is very likely they are not in the harvest, or a disciple. They really don't have a very present longing for the resurrection. Because of God's promises to us and the Spirit who is the guarantee, we know that God is with us and we will be raised. Having a hope like this allows us to "leave it all" in the harvest. Not to have this groaning and longing might mean we are too happy enjoying earth.

Vs. 6-10 So this is why Paul has that positive attitude. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* ²²*If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.* ²³*I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.* ²⁴*But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.* (Philippians 1:21-24)

V. 9 Notice our aim as we live and work in the harvest. Therefore there is not fear, but instead, expectation when we get to v. 10.

V. 10 Paul saw this as a positive thing. This entire spiritual perspective and the spiritual life Paul is talking about here can only be found following Christ in the harvest, reaching out to the lost and making disciples, who make disciples. If a person is not involved in that, they can never arrive at this heart and mind for Christ. It should be with joy that we stand before our returned Lord, offering back the "talent" He gave to us with its multiplied effect in the lives of others in the harvest. *His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'* (Matthew 25:23)

Psalm 44:9-26

After having read the first eight verses yesterday, were you ready for this? Suddenly it seems like everything reads like Job.

Vs. 9-16 If Job's friends heard this, they would say the people sinned. The Lord used situations like this in the life of Israel to humble them. One event that comes to mind was when the Assyrians marched on Jerusalem when Hezekiah was king. The Assyrians were consuming Judah although the people were following God.

Vs. 17-22 But, like Job, they had not sinned. They had really been trying to follow. Unknown to them, God used this event to bring their hearts to a "critical mass" intensity in prayer and humility before the Lord.

V. 22 Notice that Paul quotes this in Romans 8:36, *As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.'* If you reread this section of Romans you'll see that there is a very strong theme of being safe in the sovereign plan of God. But safety doesn't mean understanding what God does. Nor does safety mean not suffering during this time on earth.

Vs. 23-26 *For the sake of your steadfast love.* We have read all of the historical events that happened in Israel. There will be a few more details in Jeremiah and Daniel, but basically we have everything. So, what could this event have been that was such a distress to Israel? The Sons of Korah wrote for the temple worship, and so this must be the southern kingdom. When was there a time when the people were following God closely, but when there was an enemy at hand that was conquering the land? I would guess this was written during the time of Hezekiah when the Assyrian army was capturing the land. (See 2 Kings 18.)

Why was God allowing this? In His purpose, He was accomplishing a million things, changing the face of nations and empires. But why did Judah have to suffer like this? I'm sure there was more than one reason. But if this did happen when I think it did, it may have been used to humble the hearts of the leaders of Judah and King Hezekiah. In their desperation they cried out. The depth of their despair and seeking God was heard by the Lord as a lesson to all of us. Their tears were turned to praise when God visited the Assyrian army. Just like Job and Paul, suffering preceded praise and a true understanding of the depth of God's wisdom.

Proverbs 22:13

This is sort of like the joke, "I exercise every day. I do a half a sit-up when I get up in the morning, and I do the other half at night when I lie back down." There is some area in all of our lives where we are the sluggard.