Job 37
November 8, 2026

Open with Prayer

HOOK:
Q: What does it mean to truly know God—and what does it mean to admit when we don't? [Let people engage]

Transition: Elihu's final speech confronts Job with God's magnificence while mocking his complaints. God performs "great things beyond our understanding," yet Elihu challenges Job with a series of rhetorical questions about whether he comprehends how God controls lightning and maintains the balance of clouds. If we put ourselves in Job's shoes after listening to Elihu's questions, we might find ourselves concluding that our human comprehension of God is quite ***limited!*** Let's read the text.

BOOK:
37 "At this my heart pounds
and leaps from its place.
2 Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice,
to the rumbling that comes from his mouth.
3 He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven
and sends it to the ends of the earth.
4 After that comes the sound of his roar;
he thunders with his majestic voice.
When his voice resounds,
he holds nothing back.
5 God's voice thunders in marvelous ways;
he does great things beyond our understanding.
6 He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,'
and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.'
7 So that all men he has made may know his work,
he stops every man from his labor.
8 The animals take cover;
they remain in their dens.
9 The tempest comes out from its chamber,
the cold from the driving winds.
10 The breath of God produces ice,
and the broad waters become frozen.
11 He loads the clouds with moisture;
he scatters his lightning through them.
12 At his direction they swirl around
over the face of the whole earth
to do whatever he commands them.
13 He brings the clouds to punish men,
or to water his earth and show his love.

14 “Listen to this, Job;
stop and consider God’s wonders.
15 Do you know how God controls the clouds
and makes his lightning flash?
16 Do you know how the clouds hang poised,
those wonders of him who is perfect in knowledge?
17 You who swelter in your clothes
when the land lies hushed under the south wind,
18 can you join him in spreading out the skies,
hard as a mirror of cast bronze?
19 “Tell us what we should say to him;
we cannot draw up our case because of our darkness.
20 Should he be told that I want to speak?
Would any man ask to be swallowed up?
21 Now no one can look at the sun,
bright as it is in the skies
after the wind has swept them clean.
22 Out of the north he comes in golden splendor;
God comes in awesome majesty.
23 The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power;
in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress.
24 Therefore, men revere him,
for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Understanding God’s purposes beyond our comprehension. Storms serve multiple divine purposes—punishment, covenant love, or simply God’s pleasure—and some divine actions have no explanation beyond that they please him.1 This application addresses the human impulse to demand that every circumstance fit a rational moral calculus. Job’s situation mirrors ours: we cannot always discern why God permits suffering, and intellectual humility becomes spiritual maturity.

Cultivating awe as spiritual discipline. Elihu concludes by exhorting Job to observe God's wonders and learn from them the unsearchableness of their creator, using questions to humble Job and kindle awe.3 This suggests that intentional contemplation of what transcends human control—whether weather, mortality, or cosmic order—functions as a spiritual practice that recalibrates perspective and restores proper fear of God.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:
Wiersbe, W.W. (1996). Be Patient.* (pp. 139-142) *Victor Books

(1) Autumn (36:27–37:5). In the East, after the heat and drought of summer, both the land and the people welcome the autumn rains. It is interesting to discover Elihu's insight into the "water cycle" of nature (evaporation, condensation, precipitation) and the need for electricity (lightning) to help the "system" work.

With the mind of a scientist but the heart of a poet, Elihu describes the storm. He begins with the formation of the clouds (36:26–29), then the release of power by the lightning (vv. 30–32), and then the sound of the thunder (36:33–37:5). To Elihu, the lightning is the weapon of God (36:32), and the thunder is the voice of God (37:2, 4–5). In the East, you can see a storm brewing miles away and with fascination watch as it approaches.

What was Elihu's response to the drama of the storm? For one thing, the storm reminded him of God's sovereignty and God's goodness. "This is the way He governs the nations and provides food in abundance" (36:31, NIV). It also aroused in him a sense of awe at the mighty power of God (37:1). David recorded a similar experience in Psalm 29.

(2) Winter (vv. 6–10). At some point, the autumn rains become winter ice and snow. Workers must stop their labor, and wild animals retreat to the protection of their dens. God breathes on the waters, and they freeze. What the weatherman calls "meteorological phenomena," Elihu calls the miracle work of Almighty God. Isaac Watts agreed with Elihu when he wrote:
I sing the goodness of the Lord
That filled the earth with food;
He formed the creatures with His word,

And then pronounced them good.
There's not a plant or flower below
But makes Thy glories known;
And clouds arise and tempests blow
By order from Thy throne.

(3) Spring (vv. 11–13). Eventually the warmer winds start to blow, the snow and ice melt, and the rain clouds appear once again. Elihu knew that the wind plays a most important part in the world's weather. Nobody can predict exactly what the wind will do (John 3:8), but God is in complete control (Ps. 148:8). The "water cycle" operates effectively: the clouds are full of water, the lightning flashes, and the rain falls. Sometimes God sends the storms for discipline (Job 37:13; Gen. 6–8; Ex. 9:13–26; 1 Sam. 12:16–19); but for the most part, the rain is the gift of His love and mercy (Job 37:13).

(4) Summer (vv. 14–18). Now the clouds "hang poised" (v. 16, NIV), and everything is still. The summer sun heats the air, the south wind (the "sirocco") blows from the desert, and people start to "swelter in [their] clothes" (v. 17, NIV). The sky is like a brass mirror, and nobody feels like doing anything but resting.

But Elihu was doing much more than delivering a poetical, scientific lecture on the four seasons. He wanted Job to consider the greatness of God and the wonders of nature *and realize how little Job really knew about God and His working in this world*. Elihu asked Job three rhetorical questions—about the clouds, the lightning, the wind, and the rainless skies. "Can you explain these things?" he asked. "Can you control them?"

This led to Elihu's final thrust: "If you can't explain to us the everyday things of nature, then how will you ever prepare a court case to defend yourself before God?" He then warned Job that to challenge God might lead to Job's being swallowed up by God's judgment (v. 20). Verses 21–22 describe the "clear shining after rain" (2 Sam. 23:4), the blue sky, the bright sun, the "golden splendor" and "awesome majesty" of God (NIV). "You can't even look at the sun," says Elihu, "and yet you want to meet God face to face!"

Elihu's closing words remind us that, even though we can't fully understand God, we know that He is great and just and does not afflict men to no purpose. What should our personal response be? "Therefore, fear Him!" Job had come to that same conclusion after pondering the works of God in the world (Job 28:24–28).

It is possible that while Elihu was speaking, an actual storm was in the making in the distance; and when he finished, the storm broke—*and God was in the storm!*
Job will now get what he'd been asking for: a personal meeting with God. Was he ready? *Are we ready?*

With all his verbosity and lack of humility, Elihu did say some good things that Job needed to hear. Elihu's use of rhetorical questions in Job 37:14–18 prepared Job for the series of questions Jehovah would ask him in Job 38–41. Unlike the three friends, Elihu assessed Job's problem accurately: Job's *actions* may have been right—he was not the sinner his three friends described

him to be—but his *attitudes* were wrong. He was not the "saint" Job saw himself to be. Job was slowly moving toward a defiant, self-righteous attitude that was not at all healthy. It was this "know-it-all" attitude that God exposed and destroyed when He appeared to Job and questioned him.

So, even though God said nothing about Elihu, the man did have a helpful ministry to Job. Unfortunately, Job wouldn't accept it.

***Zuck, R. B. (1985). Job. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 765-766) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books**

37:1–5. People have always been fascinated by the awesome spectacle of lightning and thunder, God's "light and sound program," and Elihu was no exception. His **heart** pounded and palpitated. Perhaps an actual storm was approaching for he urged his debating audience to **listen** ("listen" is plural) **to the roar** (*rōḡez*, "agitation," rendered "turmoil" in 3:17, 26) **of His voice**. Thunder is often referred to as God's mighty voice (37:2, 4–5). Five times Elihu mentioned the **lightning** (36:30, 32; 37:3, 11, 15), which is sent by God. How God accomplishes these awesome **things** is **beyond** human comprehension (v. 5; cf. 36:26, 29), a truth that Eliphaz had affirmed once (5:9) and that Job had spoken of twice (9:10; 26:14).

37:6–13. Many people have experienced the restraining effect of a snowfall or a heavy **downpour**—events in nature that point people to God and **His work** (cf. 36:24; Rom. 1:20). He **stops** man's activities and **animals** run for shelter and hibernate when **the tempest** (windstorm) **comes … from its chamber**, picturesquely describing a storm being stored in a room (cf. Job 38:22) till **God** releases it. **Cold … winds** blow, **ice** is formed (by God's merely breathing, as it were), and lakes and rivers freeze over. Storm **clouds**, with **lightning** (cf. 36:30, 32; 37:3, 15) throughout them, **swirl around … the … earth**. Following God's **commands**, they bring judgment on some people by ruining their crops, flooding their possessions, and drowning them (cf. comments on 36:31a). Other times the storm clouds **water** the soil and thus demonstrate **His love** (cf. 36:31b; Acts 14:17)—evidence that His power is balanced with His benevolence.

(3) God's sovereignty in the summer.

37:14–18. Elihu then challenged **Job** to contemplate what he had been saying about **God's wonders** (cf. v. 16). In a series of questions, Elihu pointed up Job's ignorance about God's power in nature. Man does not **know how God** can possibly guide **the clouds**, cause **lightning** (cf. comments on v. 3), or even **hang** the clouds in the sky. Man is ignorant, but God **is perfect in knowledge**. Nor is man capable of doing what God does, such as **spreading out** a clear, blue, summer sky, which seems **hard** like **a mirror of … bronze** (cf. Deut. 28:23), causing people to perspire in the still, hot weather.

(4) Job's inability to understand God's ways (37:19–24).

37:19–21. If Job could not comprehend the observable actions of God in nature, how could he possibly dare **draw up** (*ʿārak*, "prepare, arrange, marshal"; cf. 13:18) his **case** for a legal battle

with God, as Job had said he wanted to do? Job could not succeed against God because man is in **darkness**, that is, ignorant, about God (cf. 38:2). To ask **to speak** in God's presence, as Job wanted to do (10:2; 13:3, 22), to accuse Him of wrongdoing would be like asking **to be swallowed up** or destroyed by God! Puny man cannot even **look at the sun** in its brightness without being blinded. How than could he hope to endure in God's presence?

37:22–24. Perhaps sensing God's approach in a windstorm (38:1), Elihu said that **God** was coming. In Ugaritic myths Baal was said to have left his golden palace in the northern mountains. But here the true God **comes** from **the north … in golden splendor**, a picture of His **awesome majesty**. As Job had said, God is **beyond** the **reach** of man's mental powers (26:14; cf. Elihu's similar words, 36:26, 29; 37:5). Then Elihu summarized the two attributes he had been defending repeatedly: God's **power** (cf. 36:22) or sovereignty, and **His justice** (cf. 34:12, 17). Elihu was sure that God's dealings with Job were **not** to **oppress** or oppose him, though Job, before Elihu spoke, could see no other explanation.

Elihu's final word was a recommendation that Job **revere** (or "fear"; cf. comments on 1:1) God, which would mean doing away with self-conceit or pride (thinking of oneself as **wise in heart**; (see NIV margin) Fearing God involves recognizing God's supremacy and man's inferiority because of his finiteness. Once again Elihu put his finger on Job's problem—pride before God (cf. 33:17; 36:9).

Job said nothing after Elihu's speeches, possibly because he saw some truth in what Elihu was saying. According to this youthful informant, God's justice should not be questioned or His sovereignty challenged, because His ways are beyond human understanding. According to Elihu, calamities can serve to remove pride and to protect people from more grave difficulties. God, then, is to be worshiped, not criticized; He is to be extolled, not examined.

Elihu fittingly prepared the way for God to speak. He did so: (a) by defending God; (b) by sensitizing Job to his need for humility; (c) by describing God's wonders in natural revelation, which God elaborated on; (d) by probing Job with thought-provoking questions (33:13; 34:17–19, 33; 35:2, 6–7; 36:19, 22–23, 29; 37:15–18, 20), a tactic that God continued; and (e) by targeting on Job's basic problem—justifying himself and condemning God—which God Himself later mentioned (cf. 32:2 with 40:8).

LOOK:

1. **Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III, *Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition: Old Testament)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 782.**

3.**James E. Smith, *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1996), 162.**

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Job 37). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

© 2026 Lee Ann Penick