

# Storms: Prepare Yourself like a Man

## Job 38:1-4

By Thurlow J. Switzer

God speaks to us in all kinds of situations, often in the storms of life. This was the case of Job. The Lord spoke to Job out of a traumatic predicament and his experience contains lessons for how we might respond to adversities.

Job's story is found in the Book of Job 1:8-12. In response to God's affirmation of Job that he was a "blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil," Satan declared: "Does God fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?" Satan said, "Stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!" God said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." Satan proceeded to afflict Job with all kinds of tragic destructions, but Job remained faithful to God, even as his soul was greatly distressed.

Each of us experience serious predicaments and sometimes tragic situations in life. I would like to ponder the truth that often men and women of God make their greatest strides in spiritual growth in times of distress, in times when the storms of life confront us.

Job 38:1-2 – 1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 2 "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

Three matters present themselves in quick order.

1. "The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind."
2. "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"
3. "Prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me."

### **First, God often speaks out of the storms of a person's life.**

Some storms of life are actual and physical; others are metaphorical, psychological and spiritual. The Lord answered Job out of the storm. In chapter 37, Elihu has turned Job's attention to the majesty and awesomeness of God, including the fact that God allows storms to unfold and uses them for His purpose, whether that be for correction or to display mercy.

Job 37:9-13 - 9 From the chamber of the south comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds of the north. 10 By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen. 11 Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His bright clouds. 12 And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, that they may do whatever He commands them on the face of the whole earth. 13 He causes it to come, whether for **correction**, or for His land, or for **mercy**. NKJV

When any of us are in a storm of life, we ask many questions. Why am I going through this storm? Why does it seem impossible for me to get out of this situation? We might think that we are tired of trying. We might be sleeping overmuch, trying to avoid life and getting up emotionally and mentally tired. We might be doing the same things over and over without positive change.

### **Secondly, our counsel is darkened by the words of other without knowledge.**

The counsel of those around, other men, our spouse, official experts, associates in business, has brought for an impact that sounds empty. Constant diagnosis at the lips of others often seems shallow and without adequate perspective.

Surely, we should not consider the counsel of ungodly people and those who profess a secular humanism without acknowledgment of God. Psalm 1:1 talks about the empty counsel of the ungodly;

that godly people should not stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful (1:2-3); for “the ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away” (v.4), and “shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (v.5). Surely, here we will expect to see the result of empty diagnosis.

However, for believers seeking the counsel of others believers, why does it seem that sometimes we come up with shallow diagnosis as well? Even the rather patient willingness of Job’s four friends to sit with him in the ash heap of pitiful sorrow brought forth only a stalemate of limited perception and often the requirement of Job to endure the power of negative suggestions. It seems in these moments, that there is no God that comprehends what is occurring; when in fact, there is a God. Other may try to give counsel, but our counsel must come from the Lord.

### **Thirdly, God speaks to Job and says, “Prepare yourself like a man.”**

God says that He Himself would question Job and that Job must answer His questions. It is like saying, “Square away your shoulders and ask yourself some questions.” God requires of Job that he “prepare himself like a man” (NKJV), or as the NIV says, “Brace yourself like a man” or as the NASB, “gird up the loins of your mind.” Earlier in the book of Job, we see, “What is man, that You should exalt him, that You should set Your heart on him” (7:17).

I think what is occurring here is the truth that the highest and most effective source of counsel is God Himself. I am not saying that we should avoid the counsel and input of others, especially mature believers, but that when all is said and done, we must hear the voice of God and answer conscientious questions that He brings to our mind and heart. Many times, we are looking for the answers, when we have not yet identified the questions. To isolate and articulate a clear question often leads to a clear and obvious answer. This is enhanced when we allow God the Spirit of examine our being with questions that touch the heart and our inner being, and in the process speak to our life, pathway, and pilgrimage.

Have you allowed yourself to be questioned by God in a most direct fashion? Have you entered into a conscientious consideration of the questions that God directs to your inner self? When you are confused and losing hope, there are some questions to ask. Job was to answer some questions that show the awesomeness of God and His providential guidance in one’s life. Who put the stars in place? Who causes the new moon to arrive on schedule? Observe the questions and principles that God puts to Job in verses 4-10 and some additional interpolations.

Job 38:4-10 - 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements [dimensions]? Surely you know! Or who stretched the [measuring] line upon it? 6 To what were its foundations [footings] fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy? 8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors, when it burst forth and issued from the womb; 9 When I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band; 10 When I fixed My limit for it, and set bars and doors.

God reveals our follies and foolishness. God speaks and says, “This far you may come, but no farther, and here your proud waves must stop!” (verse 11). Here, we find ourselves unable to go any further in our own pride, and we are restored to the posture of delighting in the law of the Lord.

Ps 1:2-3 - 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.  
NKJV

At this critical moment we come under the command-structure of God Himself, that which the Bible calls “obedience” (Gk: hupoakuo), which literally means “to hear under” the voice of God. Even as a new soldier recruit is trained to come under a new command-order, so a believer in moments of self-

examination is restored to God's command-structure. At this time, we are able to command the morning and take control of our life under God's leadership and direction.

Job 28:12 - "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place. NKJV

Have we considered the authority that God has given us? We have no authority except when under His authority. What is our response to adversity and difficulty? After renewed connection with God, what is our response to divine possibility? There are two kinds of response. (1) A passive response to adversities, such as Job's response was a passive one to his adversities. Often, we just allow things to take place; we leave God out of the picture; we complain and feel sorry for our self, we play the blame game, and we respond in fear and not faith. (2) An active response. We need more than a mere survivor spirit, but a conquering spirit. Many individuals wallow in their grief and stay down longer than they should. We must use the spiritual dynamic of dominion and take responsibility to command the morning. Ask and it shall be given, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.

We must brace ourselves and ask some self constructive questions. Sometimes, we know we are digging a hole and yet we still go down the same road. Let's pursue God in the midst of our storms and answer the deeper and often difficult questions, change our focus and allow God to make a significant change in our life. Commanding our mornings brings us into a dimension of dominion that affords opportunity for change. Surely in these passages, God is a heavenly Father teaching the importance of the foundation of vertical connectivity to almighty God.

Job 40:1-7 – 1 Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said: 2 "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it." 3 Then Job answered the Lord and said: 4 "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth. 5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; yes, twice, but I will proceed no further." 6 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 7 "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me." NKJV

Job 42:1-5 - 1 Then Job answered the Lord and said: 2 "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' 5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. NKJV

On a more practical level, allow me to present some exhortations about how to move ahead after God has spoken to you in the midst of the storms of your life.

1. **Make Choices.** Joshua: Choose today whom you will serve." He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Adam and Eve had a choice in the Garden of Eden. Would they choose to obediently eat of the Tree of Life (Etys Chayim) or would they disobediently eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? They obeyed Satan, but disobeyed God. Jesus had to make a choice in the wilderness: obey God or listen to Satan? The wilderness experiences of life test and establish the faith walk.

2. **Think Thoughtfully.** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. We have permission to think, to learn to think! We must process data and ideas in a way that makes sense as a Christian. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth (John 16:13). A serious problem exists today, always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Tim 3:5, 7).

3. **Take Risks.** Leaders take risks. Take risks in God and do not worry about failing. Stephen (Acts 7:8-10) tells the story of Joseph at a time when a king arose that knew not the story of Joseph. Three great lessons emerge about his life. (a) Joseph lived supernaturally, seen in this ability to

interpret dreams. (b) In a dream, God called Joseph to be a leader; to think and live spiritually. (c) He passed every test of his character on the way to being a leader.

4. **Embrace Sonship.** Romans eight tells us that we are no longer slaves, but adopted son (Rom 8:14-17). We relate to God our Abba Father. We are called to enter into and embrace our spiritual inheritance in Christ.

5. **Acknowledge Calling.** Romans 11 tells us that the 'gifts and callings' of God are without repentance; lifelong. God calls. When God calls, he releases favor on the individual and this favor is recognized by people and followers. We observe that in the case of Joshua (Num 27:18-20), that (a) he had the "Spirit" on him, (b) Moses placed his authority on him, and (c) people began to obey and respond to him. God releases mantles over spiritual leaders. Non-spiritual leaders or passive leaders may have a title or position, but not the mantle of authority. A mantle is the supernatural ability of complete one's mission. One's mantel exists only as long as the mission.

6. **Live Supernaturally.** Victory exists in the realm of things supernatural. Paul had true spiritual authority (Acts 19:11-16) over against the Jewish exorcists (Seven sons of Sceva). In Luke 7:6-9, the Gentile Centurion recognized Jesus' authority. Read John 6:38 and 5:30 to gain appreciation for Jesus' authority.