

An Angry Man:
The Final Call
Job 36 – 37

While sitting in the Denver airport waiting for my flight, I can hear the announcements for other flights. “This is the final call for flight #329 from Denver to Newark. This is the final call. The door will be closing and not reopened. This is the final call for flight #329 from Denver to Newark.”

Chapters 36-37 are the final call from Elihu to Job. While Job’s three friends, overcome with frustration and exhaustion, sit silently listening to Elihu’s final appeal, they know the outcome. Elihu’s attempt to bring Job to his senses will fail.

In his last attempt to bring Job to repentance, Elihu reverts to the Theory of Divine Retribution as he purports to speak on “God’s behalf” ([36:2](#)). Obvious to Elihu and the three friends, Job’s misery is the result of his sin. They believe that through this terrible ordeal, God is trying to bring Job to repentance. Finally, Elihu extolling the glories of God, hopes that Job will come to his senses seeing that God is righteous, and that Job is guilty of sin. However, Job sits dumbly before his circle of friends.

The Final Call ([36:2-23](#))

After Elihu’s presumptuous words claiming that he speaks on God’s behalf ([36:2-4](#)), he purposefully compares God’s dealing with Job to that of a teacher with a wayward pupil ([36:5-16](#), [22-23](#)). Elihu states his premise in 36:6: “He (God) does not keep the wicked alive but, gives the afflicted their right.” While God punishes the bad guys, the good guys receive God’s endorsement. As an example, Elihu draws on the kings of the world ([36:7-12](#)). Placing kings on thrones forever, God watches them. Judging them on the basis of their works, God disciplines those that transgress His laws and act arrogantly ([36:9](#)). Opening their ears, He instructs and commands the kings to return from iniquity ([36:10](#)).

Back to the Theory of Divine Retribution, Elihu states that repentance leads to prosperity and pleasantness until the end of their life ([36:11](#)). On the other hand, those that do not repent will die by the sword without understanding ([36:12](#)). The unrepentant are the kings sitting in the back of the

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class sleeping, doodling in their notebooks or passing notes to one another.

Furthermore, the angry, godless students refuse to acknowledge that God can help them in their troubles. Resisting the offer of help, these students come to their end as young “know-nothings” overcome by deeds of immorality ([36:13-14](#)).

What method of teaching does God use for these rebellious graduate students? “He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity” ([36:15](#)). Without skipping a beat, Elihu speaks directly to Job. “He also allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no cramping, and what was set on your table was full of fatness” (36:16). Job, still seeing himself as innocent before God, says “no” to God’s advances.

Wrapping up his direct assault on Job’s character, Elihu now accuses him of being obsessed with the judgment of the godless and obtaining riches for himself. The New Living Translation gives us a good understanding of Elihu’s words (36:17-19).

But you are obsessed with whether the godless will be judged.
 Don’t worry, judgment and justice will be upheld.
 But watch out, or you may be seduced by wealth.
 Don’t let yourself be bribed into sin.
 Could all your wealth or all your mighty efforts keep you from distress?

In the end, Elihu implores Job to turn from the darkness that pretends to hide his sins ([36:20](#)). Instead, Job should be on guard so that he does not turn to iniquity ([36:21](#)). In Elihu’s opinion, Job forsakes the affliction that God designs to bring him to repentance.

Don’t You Get It? ([36:22 – 37:24](#))

Still keeping Job’s attitude in mind, Elihu begins to extol the glories of God. Perhaps Elihu is asking Job, “Don’t you understand that God is not like humans? Can you summon Him to defend His ways before you?” Of course we can never summon God. God lives in exaltation above mankind and does not answer to anyone.

Beginning in [36:24-33](#), Elihu describes God and His power. God reveals Himself to man through His works in nature, resulting in men’s continual songs of praise ([Revelation 15:3](#)). He is the omnipotent everlasting God (36:26). How can Job argue with Him?

Like [Pss 18:7-15](#); [19:1-4](#); [29:3-9](#) and [68:7-9](#), Elihu uses God’s actions in nature to show God’s omniscience and omnipotence. Before

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meteorologists could understand the water cycle ([36:27-28](#)) and storm patterns ([36:29-33](#)), those who reflected on God's nature describe God's workings in minute detail. In the middle of the storms, mankind's hearts tremble ([37:1](#)). Using jagged streaks and sheets of lighting with the monstrous roar of thunder, God reveals His power in nature to both men and animals ([37:2-5](#)). God uses all these elements of nature, the snow, the rain, the wind, the ice, for His purposes ([37:6-12](#)). How do men and animals respond to God's display of His formidable power? They hide ([37:7-8](#)).

In the end, Elihu tells of God's purpose in this magnificent display of power. As 37:13 says, "Whether for correction or for his land or for love, he causes it to happen." God causes all these things to happen, not by chance, but with His purpose in mind. Who are we to argue with Him? Who is Job to summon God to explain Himself?

Turning to Job, Elihu asks two questions. "Can you explain all these things?" ([37:15-17](#)). "Can you duplicate God's actions?" ([37:18](#)). How dare a man accuse God of injustice? Using rhetorical questions, Elihu challenges Job to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Who are we to question God's actions? "Stop and consider the wondrous works of God" ([37:14](#)).

Elihu's six chapters of speech end with a question. If a man finds it difficult to look directly at the sun after the clouds have been cleared away, how can a man expect to argue his case before the magnificent God in all His glory ([37:21-23](#))? To see God in His glory means certain death for the man ([Exodus 33:20](#); [Deuteronomy 5:26](#); [Judges 6:22-23](#)).

Elihu and the three friends never convince Job of his need for repentance. Of course, they fail. Job is not guilty before God.

While his friends argue with him, Job never comes to his senses. Thinking that he could argue with God, the Sovereign One, Job demands that someone should summon God to appear in court so that Job can set forth his case. These four men, unable to help Job, understand that man and God do not speak and think on the same level. Years later, Isaiah would record God's appraisal of man's ability to think on His level.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

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Thank God that David the psalmist would see through that distance and realize the love that God has for us. “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him” (Psalm 103:11). Thank God that He bridged the wide canyon between Himself and us through Jesus Christ. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Thank God!

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