

Job 37:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy
(im-le-shevet im-le-'artso im-le-hesed yamtsi'ehu, אִם־לְשֶׁבֶט אִם־לְאַרְצוֹ אִם־לְחֶסֶד יַמְצִי'ֵהוּ, —God sends weather with three distinct purposes: shevet (שֶׁבֶט, 'rod' or 'correction'), provision for artso ('His land'), or hesed (חֶסֶד, 'covenant loyalty/mercy'). The tripartite structure is masterful: same phenomenon (rain/storm), radically different intentions.

This verse is key to theodicy: suffering is not random. Rain may discipline rebels (correction), sustain crops (provision), or demonstrate undeserved grace (mercy). The same storm can simultaneously accomplish all three for different recipients. Elihu challenges Job to discern which purpose God intends, anticipating Jesus's question: 'Do you think those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell were worse sinners?' (Luke 13:4).

Historical Context

Ancient agricultural societies understood rain's ambiguity: too little meant drought and famine; too much meant flood and destruction. Elihu theologically interprets this variability as purposeful divine speech—God communicates different messages through the same meteorological vocabulary.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you discern whether your current hardship is God's correction, provision for future growth, or undeserved mercy?
2. Why might God use the same tool (suffering/storms) for opposite purposes in different people's lives?
3. What does it mean that mercy (*hesed*) is listed alongside correction and provision—how is grace 'caused to come'?

Interlinear Text

אִם	לְשׁוֹבָת	אִם	לְאַרְצוֹ	אִם	לְחַסְדִּי
H518	whether for correction	H518	or for his land	H518	or for mercy
	H7626		H776		H2617

יְהוָה יִמְצְאוֹ:

He causeth it to come

H4672

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 18:45 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

Job 36:31 (Parallel theme): For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

Job 37:6 (Parallel theme): For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.

2 Samuel 21:10 (Parallel theme): And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

Ezra 10:9 (Parallel theme): Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

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