

Job 37:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?

Analysis

How thy garments are warm—Elihu's rhetorical question exposes human dependence on God's atmospheric control. The Hebrew חַמִּים (chammim, 'warm') describes the oppressive heat that makes clothing uncomfortable. When God **quieteth the earth** (הַשְׁׁקֵט אֶרֶץ, hashket eretz), He brings stillness and calm through **the south wind** (רוּחַ דָּרוֹם, ruach darom). In the ancient Near East, the south wind (from the Arabian desert) brought searing heat that quieted outdoor activity.

Elihu's point: if Job cannot understand basic meteorology—why warm winds make people uncomfortable—how can he question God's governance of moral providence? The question anticipates God's speeches (Job 38-41) where the Lord similarly uses creation to demonstrate human limitations. Paul echoes this humility: 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments!' (Romans 11:33). We cannot comprehend God's simplest works in nature; how arrogant to demand explanations for His moral governance.

Historical Context

Elihu (the youngest speaker, Job 32-37) represents a generation less bound by conventional wisdom that equated suffering with divine punishment. Speaking around 2000-1800 BC in the land of Uz, he observes Palestine's climate where southern winds from the Negev and Arabian deserts brought suffocating heat.

Ancient peoples lacked scientific meteorological understanding, attributing weather patterns directly to divine action—a theologically correct though scientifically incomplete perspective.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. If you cannot explain how God controls weather patterns, what does that reveal about demanding answers for why He permits suffering?
2. How does observing creation's complexity cultivate humility about questioning God's moral decisions?
3. What natural phenomena today still remind us of human limitations in comprehending divine wisdom?

Interlinear Text

מִדְרָום: אֵץ בְּמִשְׁקָט מִן יְמִינְךָ אָשָׁר
H834 How thy garments are warm when he quieteth the earth by the south
H899 H2525 H8252 H776 H1864

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