

Job 37:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.

Analysis

He sealeth up the hand of every man (beyad-kol-'adam yahtom, בְּיָדְכֹל-אָדָם יַחְתֹּם)—The verb hatam (חָתַם) means to seal, stamp, or authenticate—used of royal signet rings marking official documents. Winter weather 'seals' or immobilizes human labor, forcing cessation from agricultural work. **That all men may know his work** (lada'at kol-anshe ma'asehu, לְדַעַת כָּל-אָנָשִׁי מַעֲשֵׂהוּ)—the verb yada' (יָדָע) means intimate, experiential knowledge, not mere information.

God designs enforced rest so humans recognize their dependence on Him. This anticipates Sabbath theology: cessation from work is how creatures acknowledge the Creator's sovereignty. Ironically, Job's friends have been 'sealed up' from productive speech—their words accomplished nothing—while God will soon 'seal up' their mouths with His overwhelming self-revelation.

Historical Context

In agrarian ancient Israel, winter rains made outdoor work impossible, creating natural Sabbath periods beyond the weekly observance. Elihu interprets these seasonal limitations not as nature's cruelty but as God's pedagogy, teaching humans their creature-status through weather-enforced rest.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God 'seal up your hands' through circumstances that force you to stop striving and recognize your dependence?
2. What is the difference between knowing God's work intellectually versus knowing it experientially through forced seasons of rest?
3. Why might God use immobilization rather than prosperity to teach humans about His work?

Interlinear Text

בְּיָד	כָּל	אֶדְ דַּ	יְהוָה וְ	לֵ יָד עַת	כָּל	אֲנִשׁ י	מַעֲשָׂהוּ:
the hand	H3605	of every man	He seaeth up	may know	H3605	H376	his work
H3027		H120	H2856	H3045			H4639

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 109:27 (Parallel theme): That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it.

Psalms 111:2 (Parallel theme): The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

Isaiah 26:11 (Parallel theme): LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

Isaiah 5:12 (Parallel theme): And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

Psalms 92:4 (Parallel theme): For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

Psalms 64:9 (Parallel theme): And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

Psalms 46:8 (Parallel theme): Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

Job 9:7 (Parallel theme): Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

Job 5:12 (Parallel theme): He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

Job 12:14 (Parallel theme): Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.