



January 31, 2022

## The Faith of Sufficiency

*He comes from the north as golden splendor; With God is awesome majesty. As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him; He is excellent in power, In judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress. Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart. (Job 37:22–24)*

Even though Elihu was a smart man and engaged in a very long discourse extending through six chapters (Job 32–37), in which he sought to correct Job's assumption that God was accountable for his troubles. While he was in the midst of declaring the goodness and majesty of God, he suddenly stopped speaking, never to be heard from again. Why the silence? I suggest it is because he suddenly saw the Lord coming to answer Job "out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1). He saw God coming on the scene, "from the north." In the Bible, the term "the north" can refer to the dwelling place of God. We saw this in Isaiah's description of the fall of Satan previously, as he quoted Lucifer saying:

*"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13–14)*

Likewise, the prophet Ezekiel envisioned judgment coming from "the north," that is, from God:

*Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. (Ezekiel 1:4)*

Notice what it is that is coming out of the north: "a whirlwind." The whirlwind is a primary epiphany of God. This term is often used in conjunction with God's presence and especially his presence in judgment, as in these words of Jeremiah: "Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury—a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked" (Jer. 23:19). When Elijah was taken up into heaven at the end of his life, he went up in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). This is the biblical writer's way of saying that God came and took him. The whirlwind signifies God showing up. A similar event happened to Jesus' disciples on the day of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came there was a rushing, mighty wind (Acts 2:1–4). When you think "whirlwind," think "God is coming." And this is exactly what happened to Elihu and to Job.

Immediately following Elihu's speech we read, "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1). Now we know why Elihu stopped talking. He saw God coming. Apparently he no longer had anything to say to Job and had no desire to hear from God. He saw this whirlwind coming and said, "I'm out of here!" But Job stayed right there. Although he was silent, he did not flee from God, for God had granted him his deep desire. Repeatedly throughout his ordeal he had cried, "I would like to appear before God. Where is God? I want to talk to God!"

**Reflect:** *If you want to talk to God and you pursue that desire, God may very well grant you that talk. He'll decide when it's appropriate and under what circumstances, but if you persist, don't be surprised if you have that talk.*

*(Q) How would a talk with God about the painful ordeals you're encountering likely be a humbling, enlightening, and faith-deepening experience?*