

Theology of the Weather – Theology of Meteorology

Job 28:20-28 Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Job 37:9-14 Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north. By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud: And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

Introduction

- Weather forecasting is pretty important – news segments several times per day, radio announcements every 15 minutes, phone apps, websites, an entire weather channel
- Weather is often talked about with others – small talk, travel related weather, growing season, outdoor work limitations
- Extreme weather situations – hurricanes, typhoons, tsunamis, floods, tornadoes, thunderstorms, lightning strikes, winds, hail, droughts, famine, blizzards

God's role in the weather

- Can weather disasters be the judgment of God upon us?
- Can we pray specifically that God allows a storm to pass over a specific place?
- Is extreme weather just natural forces at work, or can it be an expression of God's wrath?

I. God is Sovereign over all aspects of nature, including the weather

A. God is sovereign

Psalm 147:5 Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.

- 1.** God's sovereignty is His right and power to do all that He decides to do
- 2.** When He decides to do a thing, He does it, and no one can stop Him
- 3.** God made man in His image, but man has been the given to make decision for himself
- 4.** God is Lord of all because He made it all

B. Normal operations

- 1.** God chooses to allow the natural world to operate under His creative design
- 2.** God's natural laws operate with predictable outcomes, He created an orderly system
- 3.** Within Creation, God has set an order for how things normally operate
 - a)** Earth's rotation once every day and orbit around the sun once every year (light/darkness)
 - b)** Gravity
 - c)** Fall, winter, spring, summer seasons

Genesis 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.
 - d)** Water cycle – precipitation, evaporation, condensation
- 4.** Having control over all is not the same thing as direct intervention over all weather
- 5.** God doesn't control the weather with a bunch of knobs, buttons and switches

C. God's interventions – yes there are times when God intervenes in the weather

- 1.** The Flood in Noah's day

Genesis 6:17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

Genesis 7:4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

Genesis 7:11-12 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

2. Famine in the days of Joseph

Genesis 41:29-30 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

3. Hail during the 10 Plagues against Egypt

Exodus 9:22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

4. Wind that divided the Red Sea

Exodus 14:21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

5. Hail stones that killed Israel's enemies

Joshua 10:11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

6. Thunderstorm that helped the Israelites defeat the Philistines

1 Samuel 7:10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

7. No rain during the days of Elijah

1 Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom

I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

1 Kings 18:1 And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

8. A great storm when Jonah was fleeing to Tarshish

Jonah 1:4 But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

9. Jesus calms the storm

Matthew 8:25-27 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

II. Extreme weather isn't always evil or the work of the devil, even though its results can be tragic

A. Tragic results of extreme weather

1. Hurricanes, floods
2. Lightning
3. Blizzard, cold
4. Wind, tornado
5. Drought, famine

B. Weather functions are natural processes designed by God for a purpose

1. Rain waters the earth
2. Wind provides cooling from the sun
3. Flooding may seem to be a nuisance in urban areas, but it can be helpful for watering crops
4. Volcanoes and earthquakes surely have a purpose in relieving pressures beneath the surface of the earth
5. Lightning indirectly adds nitrogen to the soil and adds a layer of ozone to protect us from ultraviolet light

C. It seems likely that extreme weather conditions are a result of the Fall of man and the earth being cursed – the weather described in the Garden of Eden was different than what we experience today

Genesis 2:5-6 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

- D. Job's experiences reveal that Satan was able to manipulate the weather for evil

Job 1:16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Job 1:18-19 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

- E. Death and destruction caused by weather is not necessarily the judgment of God, many times it is just the results of living in a world that will have favorable and unfavorable conditions – we cannot blame God for every unfavorable part of life

III. God can manipulate the weather in answer to the prayers of His people or to bring judgment

- A. Answers to prayer

- 1. Elijah's prayers

James 5:17-18 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

- 2. Joshua's prayer for more daylight

Joshua 10:12-14 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the

midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

B. Prayers that didn't seem to get a positive answer

- 1.** Surely there are many believers who have prayed that it would rain or that it would stop raining; Sometimes the drought came anyway and other times the floods came
- 2.** The fact that God didn't answer those prayers doesn't mean that those believers were being punished or forgotten
- 3.** Destructive weather events happen to both believers and unbelievers
- 4.** We often try to make sense of human tragedies – we want to know why something happened – many times there will not be a good answer as to why someone's life was taken in an extreme weather event
- 5.** It isn't healthy to attribute a hurricane or flood to God's judgment upon man for sin – we are not the judge nor are we to attribute something like that as God's hand of judgment especially since it affects both believer and unbeliever in one location

C. Judgment of God can include weather events

- 1.** Samuel's call for thunder and rain
1 Samuel 12:16-18 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.
- 2.** No rain for some
Amos 4:7 And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.
- 3.** Multiple extreme weather events will be a sign of the Second coming of Christ
Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be?

and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Matthew 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

4. During the 7-year Tribulation

Revelation 16:17-21 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

IV. It is more important to know the God of the weather than the weather forecast

A. The Pharisees knew a little bit about weather forecasting, but they couldn't see that Jesus was the Son of God

Matthew 16:1-3 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

Luke 12:54-56 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

- B.** We might be quick to blame God for tragic weather events, but we fail to recognize that God's creation hasn't gone out of control
- C.** The weather and all of God's creation point us to God
Psalms 19:1-3 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.