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## Whirlwinds

Late Spring to mid Autumn, North America is subject to one of nature's most inexplicable phenomena; the tornado. In the Bible these are referred to as whirlwinds and are used to demonstrate the power and might of God. In our time tornadic events are generally unpredictable until right at the time they occur. Even then, armed with sophisticated weather radar and imaging stations, it is difficult to confirm the existence of a raging vortex. Often professional meteorologists must rely on weather spotters and witnesses to determine the location and nature of the storm. Many times it is not until after the storm has struck that it's nature and degree are understood. With that in mind, as we look at physical things that speak to us of God's power, we find that this is used in both a figurative and literal manner to demonstrate the nature and ability of the Lord. We know the story of Job, how he was hated for being righteous by Satan, who accused Job of serving God only for the benefits. Satan was allowed to destroy Job's possessions, family, livestock and servants in a variety of ways and then to afflict the man, but not kill him (**Job 1-3**). Accused of deceit, unrighteousness and hypocrisy by his friends it was the appearance of the Lord, speaking to Job from a whirlwind, that turned all human voices to silence and caused even the righteous Job to repent (**Job 38-42**). As Elijah neared the end of his stay on earth, understanding God would take him soon, his successor, Elisha, asked for a double portion of the prophets spirit to carry on the work. To this Elijah stated "***Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.***" (**2 Kngs 2.10**). As they journeyed, a chariot and horses of fire came between them and Elijah was carried away in the chariot by a whirlwind (**2 Kngs 2.11**). This is a powerful statement of God's deliverance and ability to save as Elijah, weary of the state of the nation, had prayed to die. In the writing of Solomon, God speaks of the speed and severity of his judgment against those who would not listen and invokes the image of the whirlwind. "**I**

***also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.***" (**Prov 1.26-27**). We understand the brutal nature of the whirlwind and how it cannot be tamed or stopped but must expend it's energy before it leaves. God also uses the image of the whirlwind to denote the instability of lives that are not godly. "***As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.***" (**Prov 10.25**). The power of God's judgment is described in a fashion that should cause dread to arise in the hearts of those who do not obey. "***For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.***" (**Isa 66.15**). The prophet Nahum wrote concerning the evil of the Assyrians and spoke of the patience and power of God. "***The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.***" (**Nah 1.3**). Habakkuk speaks of the deliverance of God and now uses the image of the whirlwind, not to show God's power, but to show how much greater than this God is. "***Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.***" (**Hab 3.14**). A being who can create, control and overcome the whirlwind is indeed one to be loved, feared and obeyed. God has placed his unique signature all around us in the world as we see the magnitude of the creation and the powerful forces that animate it. All of which are under the constant control and care of their creator and master.