



Extreme Weather

Assembly

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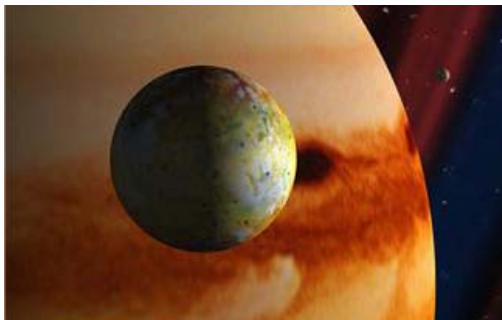
Aim:

- To consider the Christian belief that God has power and authority
- To reflect on how we deal with storms in our lives

Introduction

What's the weather like?

In the first couple of weeks of this new year, we have already seen some unusual displays of weather and other phenomena – extremely low temperatures in Britain, floods in Australia, a partial eclipse of the sun and meteor showers. There have been concerns that thousands of birds in Arkansas died on New Year's Day because of the weather (although this is only one theory for the deaths), and water shortages in Northern Ireland because frozen pipes burst.



Telescopes have revealed volcanoes on Jupiter's moon called Io, sight of distant galaxies and hitherto unknown evidence of the impact on space of storms on Earth.

Looking Deeper

Controlling the weather

Christians believe that God initiates weather patterns for our planet and the universe, although clearly human activities have some impact on Earth's climate. A poem, written about 3000 years ago, and recorded in the Bible, celebrates God's involvement:

Sing to the LORD with grateful praise;
make music to our God on the harp.
He determines the number of the stars
and calls them each by name.
He covers the sky with clouds;
he supplies the earth with rain
and makes grass grow on the hills.
He spreads the snow like wool
and scatters the frost like ashes.
He hurls down his hail like pebbles.
Who can withstand his icy blast?
He sends his word and melts them;
he stirs up his breezes, and the waters
flow.

(This is taken from Psalm 147)

Extreme weather can raise feelings of fear, as people feel completely at the mercy of something over which they have no control. Some first century fishermen experienced feelings of powerlessness and terror when they found themselves in a boat in the middle of an unusually severe storm on Lake Galilee. Jesus was a passenger on their boat and they were astonished to discover that he was sleeping through the storm while they were convinced that the boat would sink and everyone would drown. When they roused him, Jesus stood up and commanded the storm to stop. Instantly it did! The fishermen, who had previously been terrified of drowning, now were terrified at finding themselves in the presence of someone who could speak to weather and get a response.

(This story is found in Luke chapter 8:22-25)



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Reflection

Coping with storms

People in Britain do not often find themselves at the centre of life-threatening storms, but storms do often arise in emotions, relationships and circumstances. Think about how you cope with storms that develop in your life. Does your the coping mechanisms make matters better or worse? Are there any solutions short-term or long-term? Does the strategy for dealing with the storm create peace, or further storms?

Christians believe that whatever circumstances they face in life God is with them. When they ask for his help, he may miraculously make the storm dissipate, or he may stand by them, giving them courage and strength to ride out the storm.



Thoughts for the day

- **I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning to sail my ship.**

~ Louisa May Alcott

- **True courage consists not in flying from the storms of life, but in braving and steering through them with prudence.**

~ Hannah Webster Foster

- **Seamen learn to get to know each other during a storm.**

~ Corsican Proverb

Prayer

Lord God,
Thank you for your promise to be with us always. As we face storms in our lives please help us to remember that you are there, and to turn to you for help.
Amen.