

Letter 876q
Winter Power Outage
2021-10-26

Dear **Yeshua**,

Wednesday, 13 January 2021, 9:30AM.

Last night I went to bed and then and to sleep a little earlier than normal. I think I was asleep before 9 o'clock, but I woke up at about 10PM from a dream. I remembered at the time the contents of the dream, but I was too groggy to try to record it, so I just went back to sleep.

Then I woke up again at about midnight. I was troubled and perhaps a little sore from wrestling. So I decided to go into the kitchen and make some soup. At the same time the wind outside was starting to pick up, and then at about 12:40AM (according to my wife), the power went out. But my soup was still in the microwave, and only partially cooked, so I pulled it out of the oven and put it into the refrigerator.

This was one of those freeze-dried noodle soup bowls, where you add some water and put the whole thing right in the microwave. Even though they are high in sodium and other chemicals, they are pretty good tasting, and easy to make.

But the power was out so I couldn't eat my soup, and I couldn't watch TV to try to go back to sleep. So I got on my iPhone and sent a text message. I was trying to send it to a friend who works the "graveyard" shift in Seattle to see if the wind was blowing there as well. But my text message inadvertently went to my sister-in-law. This is because I don't text very often, so I'm not very cognizant of the fact that you have different text-threads, or channels, to different people, and if you're not paying attention when you activate the text application, it's still stuck on the most recent person you texted to. In this case, my in-law relative.

So, my first text went to my sister in-law saying the power was out. She sent a reply back to me almost immediately. But she lives in Sacramento. The wind-storm up here had nothing to do with the weather down there.

Next, I figure out how to send a text to my friend who works in Seattle. He gets back to me right away telling me that "yeah, the power is out all over."

So I think to myself:

"OK, this is larger than just the valley where I live;..."

... as we routinely have high winds up here in the late fall and winter making the power go off. But typically the power is restored within an hour or so.

Nope, this was one of those "big blows" (a-la "Gallop Gertie"), which occurs periodically here in Western Washington. But I was able to get a message through to the Power Company that our power was out.

Then, about an hour later the cell phone service goes down. So we don't have that either. I was able to get back to sleep, and I woke up about 5:30 or 6AM, so I actually slept somewhat normally after waking up in the middle of the night (thank God).

But the power has been out since 12:40 AM this morning. It's now 9:38AM. It could still be a while.

P. S. I remember during the first Clinton inauguration that we had a really major windstorm. This was during the winter in January, and the power was out for a long time; in some places for several weeks. The winds were so strong that they blew down some main electrical lines, which in turn had to be rebuilt. I don't know if it's going to be like that here again this time or not. But for the record that is what's going on right now.

(SPECIAL NOTE: Below is a quote from a website about the Inauguration Day 1993 storm.

<https://climate.washington.edu/stormking/January1993.html>

“According to some accounts, the Inaugural Day storm of 1993 was the most destructive windstorm in Washington State since the great Columbus Day Storm of 1962. The January 20, 1993 storm certainly wreaked havoc. In Washington, many trees and power poles were toppled, forcing the widespread closure of roads. At least 79 homes were destroyed, 581 suffered major damage, and 1,702 experienced minor damage. Power was terminated to about 750,000 customers in the Puget Sound Area. A state of emergency was declared in the cities of Auburn, Bellevue, Normandy Park, Renton and Seattle, and the counties King, Lewis, Snohomish, Thurston and Wahkiakum. Five people were killed in King County: three by falling trees, one by a falling power line, and another of a heart attack while cleaning up debris. The Evergreen Point Floating Bridge suffered \$500,000 in damage, and both of the Lake Washington floating bridges were closed due to unusually high waves at the height of the storm.

Total losses in Washington from the Inaugural Day storm were estimated at \$130 million. This level of destruction certainly puts the storm among the most costly since the Columbus Day storm, which cost about \$40 million in 1962 dollars in Washington State (adjusted to 2001, this would be about \$400 million). An argument could be made for the February 13, 1979 windstorm causing a greater economic loss than the 1993 event, mainly due to the catastrophic failure of a single significant structure: the Hood Canal Floating Bridge. The replacement cost for the bridge's missing west end was \$143 million in ~1982 dollars. To put the bridge's value in another perspective, the original construction cost of \$26,630,000 in ~1961 dollars is equivalent to about 66.5% of the Columbus Day Storm's damage total. And, after the 1979 storm had violently converted the bridge into an expensive pier, the span wasn't reopened for 3.5 years, a major inconvenience for those traveling between the Olympic Peninsula and the Puget Lowlands.

By strength of wind, the Inaugural Day storm was generally the most powerful gale to strike the Puget Sound Area since the sweeping tempest of November 14, 1981 and disruptive Thanksgiving Day storm of 1983. Gusts at Sea-Tac airport reached 67 mph in 1981, 62 mph in 1983 and 64 mph in 1993. At some locations, the 1993 storm produced the highest gusts since the Columbus Day Storm. In fact, in a ranking system that uses peak gusts from six Seattle area stations, the Inaugural Day storm was clearly the strongest since the Big Blow of 1962. And an argument could be made among a select few places for the strongest winds since the powerful October 21, 1934 windstorm--in other words, the highest gusts in nearly 60 years. One of the stations in the latter category was Boeing Field, which experienced a peak gust of 70 mph in the 1993 storm, somewhat higher than the 66 mph produced by the Columbus Day Storm, and not far off of the estimated 75 mph peak gust during the 1934 gale, which produced one of the highest sustained winds ever recorded at the old Seattle Airport--58 mph.

The northwest tip of Oregon also suffered a severe strike from the Inaugural Day Storm. Wind gusts reached 98 mph near Tillamook, and may have been higher in the Coast Range, where at least \$3 million in trees, mostly old growth, were toppled. The Nehalem River Valley in the northern end of the mountains appears to have been among the places hardest hit, with many homes and vehicles destroyed by the collapsing timber. Power outages were widespread. One power company reported about \$1 million in damages to its distribution system.

With a central pressure of about 976 mb at landfall, the Inaugural Day storm shares a common intensity with the October 2, 1967 storm that crashed ashore in Western Oregon as a 977 mb system. The March 26, 1971 storm was a 978 mb cyclone as it raced northward off the Washington Coastline and landed on the tip of the Olympic Peninsula. The reader is encouraged to visit the web pages on these storms to compare the results from cyclones of similar intensity.”

Blessings...

R. C. Theophilus