

WOMEN IN THE WORD OF

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH

“Job: A 12-Week Study” by Eric Ortlund

Week Seven: Job’s Final Speech

March 22, 2022

Today we will be looking at the last words Job speaks before God appears. In chapters 28-31, he meditates on wisdom, recounts his life before his trial began, and defends himself one last time against the accusations of his “comforters.”

Chapter 28

In this passage, Job delivers a beautiful poetic speech in praise of wisdom.

It’s understandable that Job would stop and reflect on where wisdom can be found, for thus far there has been no solution or resolution of issues in his and his friends’ speeches.

The chapter is divided into three strophes, followed by a conclusion in verse 28:

Section 1, verses 1-11: Ancient mining technology

Section 2, verses 13-19: Wisdom, a priceless treasure

Section 3, verses 20-27: God alone has wisdom

Conclusion, verse 28: God defines wisdom

Notice that Job begins with a fascinating description of the ingenuity of man in acquiring treasure from the earth by mining.

Job has no desire to belittle the work of God’s hands, but has a higher view of man than his friends.

Verses 3 and 4 describe the ancient mining process, digging a shaft deep into the earth and lowering men into it.

Modern mining techniques may have changed, but it still often involves great expense, having to travel to remote areas, and some degree of danger.

Job makes an interesting contrast in verses 5-6, that the same earth that gives crops on its surface holds gems and precious metals deep within.

Verses 7-8 highlight the superiority of man over the animals in technical skill.

God has given man a special place in the world, with gifts and abilities beyond those of any animal.

Verses 9-11 finish out this strophe with additional descriptions of the great lengths to which people will go to extract treasure from the earth, and different methods used to do so.

Job's question in verse 12 is profound. Men invest so much time, effort, resources and knowledge in trying to acquire the treasures of the earth. But what about wisdom?

First, let's look at some definitions of wisdom:

1. The quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment; the quality of being wise.
2. The soundness of an action or decision with regard to the application of experience, knowledge, and good judgment.
3. The ability to discern inner qualities and relationships; insight

Using a variety of images, Job expounds on the idea that wisdom cannot be purchased with precious gems or metals, nor do these things even begin to compare in value to obtaining wisdom.

No amount of these things would be enough to buy wisdom.

The question in verse 20 almost seems the same as that in verse 12, but notice the difference: where does wisdom *come from*?

Verses 21-2 declare that wisdom is hidden from both men and animals, and not known in the world of Sheol.

Then verses 23-4 reveal the truth that God does know wisdom, for He sees and understands everything.

The forces of nature which seem so powerful and completely out of control to us are entirely in His hand, as recorded in Mark 4:39, when Jesus stilled the storm and the sea.

Chapter 28 concludes with a definition of spiritual wisdom.

Note that this verse echoes Job 1:1.

God is the source of wisdom and we will find it when we fear Him and turn from evil.

In Proverbs Chapter 8, we find many similarities to this chapter in Job.

How do we respond to the call to find wisdom and live by it? One important answer to that is to study and learn the Word of God.

Knowing the Word and hiding it in our hearts will keep us from buying into the counterfeit wisdom of the world.

When we go to the world for wisdom, it will fail us, because it is not from God. In fact, it is very possibly the opposite of God's wisdom:

1 Corinthians 3:18-20

In addition to learning the wisdom of God in His word, we can pray and ask for it:

James 1:5-7

But we don't need to be asking God for wisdom concerning matters that are already clearly answered in Scripture.

Too often, instead of recognizing the value of God's wisdom, we want what we want.

The approval of people or the world can be more important to us than living by God's wisdom.

Failure to follow God's wisdom can be evidence of a lack of faith.

Let us always remember that Jesus is the fullness of God's wisdom:

1 Corinthians 1:20-24

In Colossians 2:3, Paul says of Christ that He is the one "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Chapter 29

In this chapter, Job gives us a remarkable illustration of his former life, before his trials began.

This chapter could be easily misunderstood. In this passage, Job could come across as having an attitude like the Pharisees of Jesus' day.

Matthew 23:5-7

Luke 11:42-3

But we know that is NOT who Job was at all.

Job enjoyed the things that were traditionally viewed as blessings from the hand of God: a large family, prolific herds, and productive lands.

In many passages of Scripture, the rich are equated with the wicked.

As a result, they are often hated, envied, possibly feared.

But Job enjoyed not only the blessings of God, but also the love and respect of the people. He was a benefactor to the orphan, the widow, those who were in need of justice and protection from evildoers.

Job was mourning the loss of his ability to be a servant leader. It was who God created him to be and he glorified God in it.

Matthew 5:14-16

Ephesians 2:8-10

Chapter 30

This chapter is Job's final lament. Following the description in Chapter 29 of Job's high position in the community, there is stark contrast here. Even the "rabble" now mock and spit at him.

Men younger than he, who were expected in those times to respect their elders, make fun of him.

Job again directly addresses God with complaints similar to those he has voiced before in verses 16-23, ending with the thought that he expects to die soon. He can't understand why he is not being rescued or comforted since he had always wept for and aided those who were hurting.

Chapter 31

In this final section of Job's speech we find his strongest declaration of his innocence. In a self-imprecation, he boldly challenges God to bring judgment on him if he is deserving of it.

We have here a record of important moral issues that Job understood in a way that few do. He was passionate about doing what was right in God's eyes.

Verses 1, 9-12: lust, adultery

Verses 5-8: lying, dishonesty in business

Verses 13-15: inhumane treatment of servants

Verses 16-23: victimizing the poor or weak

Verses 24-5: greed

Verses 26-8: idolatry

Verses 29-30: attitude toward enemies

Verses 31-2: hospitality

Verses 33-4: hidden sin

Job makes some remarkable statements in this chapter. He has values that were almost unheard of in his time and for a man of his high and wealthy position.

At a time when women and servants or slaves were looked on as property more than human beings, Job reveals that he understands the value that God places on human life.

In verses 35-7, Job repeats his desire to be heard and for God to answer him. At this point, "the ball is in God's court" as far as he is concerned and there is nothing left to do but wait for Him to answer.

We can learn a great deal from this final speech of Job's. Are we as passionate about pleasing God in our behavior, even in our very thoughts?

Application

1. Seek wisdom as the ultimate treasure.
2. Fear God and turn from evil.
3. Do good, out of a heart of love and in response to God's gracious mercy and love toward us.

Next week:

Week 8: Elihu's Speeches, pp. 59-65 in the study book
Job, Chapters 32-7