

# Where Can Wisdom Be Found? • Job 28

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *Gaining Wisdom*

1. A little boy came to his father and asked him, "Dad, who made God?"
2. The father, engrossed in the evening paper, responded, "Beats me, son."
3. The little boy would not be put off. "Dad, why is the earth round?"
4. The dad answered, "I don't know, son."
5. The boy played for a minute, then asked, "Dad, is there life on other planets?"
6. The father patiently answered, "Nobody knows the answer to that."
7. Finally the boy asked his father, "Dad, do you mind me asking you all these questions?"
8. The father put down his paper, "Why not at all son," he said, "how else are you going to learn?"

### B. *We Keep Asking*

1. Some of the questions we ask as children, we find ourselves still asking as adults
2. Because try as we might, human wisdom and learning has not provided the answers
3. There are some things, only God knows
4. And some of the most crucial questions we have, only He can answer
5. Job 28 teaches this truth

## II. TEXT

### A. *Set The Scene*

1. As we come to chapter 28, the 3 cycles of debate between Job and his friends are over
2. Job's would-be counselors told him the reason he was suffering was because God was punishing him for some hideous sin he was keeping secret
3. After each one of them would give forth with his argument - Job would respond with a rebuttal and then another lament for the severity of his trial
4. But now, the friends are silent, and Job makes one final go at showing the utter uselessness of their counsel
5. In this chapter, Job laments the fact that he needs wisdom and understanding -
6. But he doesn't know where to get it.
7. He certainly hasn't gotten it from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar!
8. Job knows the debate has reached an impasse - and that there are some things that are known only to God

### B. *Vs. 1-11*

{1} "Surely there is a mine for silver, And a place *where* gold is refined.

{2} Iron is taken from the earth, And copper *is* smelted *from* ore.

**{3} Man puts an end to darkness, And searches every recess For ore in the darkness and the shadow of death.**

**{4} He breaks open a shaft away from people; In places forgotten by feet They hang far away from men; They swing to and fro.**

**{5} As for the earth, from it comes bread, But underneath it is turned up as by fire;**

**{6} Its stones are the source of sapphires, And it contains gold dust.**

**{7} That path no bird knows, Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.**

**{8} The proud lions have not trodden it, Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.**

**{9} He puts his hand on the flint; He overturns the mountains at the roots.**

**{10} He cuts out channels in the rocks, And his eye sees every precious thing.**

**{11} He dams up the streams from trickling; What is hidden he brings forth to light.**

1. Man has proven his genius at investigating the world around him
2. His inquisitive nature has driven him into caves and made him dig tunnels to bring the hidden things to light
3. And in all his quests for knowledge, he has discovered some wonderful things
  - a. he's found iron and copper and learned how to smelt them and turn them into useful tools
  - b. he's discovered gold and silver and precious gems
  - c. and having discovered their beauty and usefulness, he's gone anywhere and everywhere to find more
  - d. he's dug mines, and lowered himself in baskets into deep pits
  - e. fire has enabled him to tame the environment and provided the basic tool necessary for technology
  - f. and now, instead of being like the animals which simply have to adapt to their environment, man reshapes the hills and causes the environment to adapt to *him*
4. Job is showing man's ingenuity and technological ability - the tremendous skill he has over the physical world
5. But while man has developed such a high level of knowledge about the material universe, he remains woefully ignorant of the spiritual realm . . .

### **C. Vs. 12-19**

**{12} "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?"**

**{13} Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living.**

**{14} The deep says, 'It is not in me'; And the sea says, 'It is not with me.'**

**{15} It cannot be purchased for gold, Nor can silver be weighed for its price.**

**{16} It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx or sapphire.**

**{17} Neither gold nor crystal can equal it, Nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold.**

**{18} No mention shall be made of coral or quartz, For the price of wisdom is above rubies.**

**{19} The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, Nor can it be valued in pure gold.**

1. The key to understanding what Job is saying in this chapter is to remember what his big issue with God was
2. Job wanted to know *why* he was suffering
  - a. you see, contrary to what his friends were saying, he knew he *wasn't*

- being judged for sin
  - b. and he knew God was all-good & all-powerful
  - c. so *why* was he suffering?
- 3. His question was simple; one word, three letters "**WHY?**"
  - a. "Why is this happening to me God?"
  - b. "Please tell me! - WHY?"
- 4. Here in chapter 28, Job says that man can explain the HOW of things - but not the WHY?
- 5. Man possesses tremendous KNOWLEDGE, but WISDOM eludes him
- 6. And wisdom is far more valuable than all the gold and gems man has unearthed and prizes so greatly
- 7. But man doesn't exert one-tenth the effort to find it
- 8. And in all his searching he's not discovered it in the depths of the earth, nor in the far reaches of the sea

#### **D. Vs. 20-22**

**{20} "From where then does wisdom come? And where *is* the place of understanding?**

**{21} It is hidden from the eyes of all living, And concealed from the birds of the air.**

**{22} Destruction and Death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'**

- 1. Not only is wisdom not found in the depths, but it's also not in the heights where the birds make their nests
- 2. Death and the grave are not the place of enlightenment
- 3. No - wisdom does not find it's source with man or the earth
- 4. Wisdom's source, is God

#### **E. Vs. 23-28**

**{23} God understands its way, And He knows its place.**

**{24} For He looks to the ends of the earth, And sees under the whole heavens,**

**{25} To establish a weight for the wind, And apportion the waters by measure.**

**{26} When He made a law for the rain, And a path for the thunderbolt,**

**{27} Then He saw *wisdom* and declared it; He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.**

**{28} And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom, And to depart from evil *is* understanding.'**"

- 1. Wisdom's source is God - it comes from Him
- 2. Just as He created the physical universe and set certain *natural* laws to govern it -
- 3. So God created the spiritual realm, and He has set certain *moral* laws that govern *it*
- 4. The common thread that ties all these things together is *wisdom*
- 5. In fact, in Proverbs 3:19-20, we see that Wisdom was the blueprint for all of creation

**{19} The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens;**

**{20} By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew.**

- a. we have blueprints for the Eastman project - on table in Quad
- b. first pages very general - give the basic shape of the building and rooms

- c. but as you work your way deeper into them, page by page, they become more complex
  - d. these are the *engineering* drawings - they spell out where every pipe and wire and beam go
  - e. they are the *guts* that together make up the whole
6. Wisdom is the *engineering plan* for all creation - both the material and spiritual realms
8. In Proverbs 8, Wisdom is personified and speaks about how critical it was to the creation

**Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him (v.30)**

9. Because wisdom is so critical and central to all God is doing and has done, wisdom says . . .

**{32} “Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children, for blessed are those who keep my ways.**

**{33} Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain *it*.**

**{34} Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.**

**{35} For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD;**

**{36} But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death.”**

## **F. Value**

1. In the ancient world, people placed great value in precious metals and gems
2. And while we still place significant value in these things,
3. In the Information Age, the real value is in "knowledge"
4. But today - as in Job's day - wisdom is left out of the picture
5. Yet wisdom is the key that unlocks the *meaning* of life
6. It's the warp and woof of all creation
7. Wisdom allows us to step back from the details of daily life and see the bigger picture and realize what's really important
8. Chuck Swindoll tells a true story that comes from the sinking of the Titanic.
  - a. a frightened woman found her place in a lifeboat that was about to be lowered into the raging North Atlantic.
  - b. she suddenly thought of something she needed, so she asked permission to return to her stateroom before they cast off.
  - c. she was granted three minutes or they would have to leave without her.
  - d. she ran across the deck that was already slanted at a dangerous angle.
  - e. she raced through the gambling room with all the money that had rolled to one side, ankle deep.
  - f. she came to her stateroom and quickly pushed aside her diamond rings and expensive bracelets and necklaces as she reached to the shelf above her bed and grabbed three small oranges.
  - g. then she quickly found her way back to the lifeboat and got in.
  - h. 30 minutes earlier she would not have chosen a crate of oranges over even the smallest diamond.
  - i. but death had boarded the Titanic - one blast of its awful breath had

- transformed all values.
- j. instantaneously, priceless things had become worthless and worthless things had become priceless.
  - k. and in that moment she preferred three small oranges to a crate of diamonds.
9. So many of the things people place supreme value in are really empty, vain, and useless
  10. How much of what you're pouring your life into in the end is really just dust

### **G. Wisdom's Source**

1. Job, who at one time had possessed great wealth, gold silver and precious gems, was now reduced to *nothing*
  - a. all he had left was his faith in God
  - b. and being in this place, he came to see the true value of wisdom
  - d. when all is said and done, and life is over, when gold and silver and sapphires have to be left behind, the only thing that really matters is knowing what it's all about
  - e. so Job asked where such wisdom could be found
2. And the answer that comes to him is that wisdom lies with God - He is it's source
3. Just as gold & sapphires have their place in the earth and have to be mined -
4. So wisdom has it's place; it's in the Lord - and the way to mine it is to fear the Lord and depart from evil
5. This chapter foreshadows the great lesson God teaches Job at the end of the book
  - a. you see, Job has all along been demanding that God come and explain why all this was happening to him
  - b. when God does finally show up - He rebukes Job for demanding anything from Him
  - c. God is God and Job is a man, and the Lord owes him nothing!
  - d. as soon as Job is confronted with the awesomeness of God's revelation, he realizes his error
  - e. and confesses that it is enough just to have seen God
  - f. he doesn't get the answer to why these things have befallen him, but it doesn't matter to him anymore
  - g. you see, his need to know why is lost in the bigger revelation of God Himself
6. Charles Colson tells how when he was an aide to President Nixon, he would regularly meet people who had an appointment with the President
  - a. many of these visitors had some burning question they wanted to grill Nixon with; some issue that was their pet cause & Passion
  - b. so Colson would meet with them and find out what it was, and then in preparation for meeting the President, would walk them around the power centers of the White House
  - c. they would go from office to office, meeting increasingly more important people

- d. then he would take them through the elaborate Secret Service apparatus that protects the president
  - e. by the time they entered the Oval office, Colson said that virtually everyone was reduced to a place of complete awe and were almost speechless
  - f. then, just being in the Oval Office, seeing the President sitting behind his desk, was enough to silence even the most confident visitors
7. That is but a very imperfect picture of what we see happening to Job
    - a. Job had demanded the reason for his suffering from God
    - b. but when he sees the Lord, his long held and loudly declared question dies on his lips
    - c. it vanishes in light of the revelation of God
  8. This chapter foreshadows that great lesson Job will later learn
  9. And it teaches us this: When all is said and done, what matters is not the wealth and power we've been able to accumulate but that we know God and that that knowledge has changed the way we live
  10. Look at the words of v. 28 once more
 

**{28} And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom, And to depart from evil *is* understanding.'**"
  11. Here is wisdom, here is the greatest treasure you or I can possess -
    - a. to know the God of glory
    - b. and to live life in the light of that knowledge
  12. Wisdom is understanding that God put you on this little planet spinning in the unlimited expanse of heaven to know Him
    - a. wisdom is knowing that what happens in your life is ultimately, the plan of God to deepen your knowledge of Him and His ways
    - b. wisdom teaches that instead of seeking the way *out* of your trials, you seek Him
    - c. wisdom tells us WHY - and the answer is GOD!

## **H. The WHY**

1. "WHY?" is not a question science can answer
2. Science can tell us "How" but not "Why"
3. The problem for many people today is that they have been led to believe science held all the answers
4. During the 50's and 60's we were told that as we entered the information age, science would solve all the remaining mysteries of the universe
5. In fact, I remember seeing a few articles some time back saying there were no new frontiers; no major riddles left to explain;
  - a. one article was titled "The End of Science"
  - b. written a bit pre-maturely I think
  - c. in fact, man's inquisitive nature, which Job celebrates here, has pressed on
  - d. and the rate at which we are making new discoveries has skyrocketed
6. Someone has estimated that, if all of man's accumulated knowledge from the beginning of recorded history to 1845 were represented by one inch,

- a. then what we learned in the 100 years from 1845 until 1945 would amount to three inches
  - b. and what we learned in the 30 years from 1945 until 1975 would represent the height of the Washington Monument!
  - c. and what we've learned since then would take us well on our way to the moon
7. But you'd be hard pressed to find someone today who didn't also believe that all that knowledge has not equaled a genuine improvement in man's *condition*
  8. As luxury has increased, morality has declined
  9. For instance:
    - a. we now possess the knowledge and technology to split the atom
    - b. and we can control this process in such a way that we can make a device that when set off, will totally destroy a vast area, poisoning the environment with lethal radiation for hundreds of years
    - c. we've gotten so skilled at this, we can place this device in a container the size of a small suitcase
    - d. projects are under way right now to reduce the size of these lethal bombs down to something no bigger than the size of one's open hand; called *micro-nukes*
  10. Yes, we possess the knowledge to build nuclear weapons; but we lack the wisdom to *not* build them
  11. We know that if there ever were a war in which there was a wide-spread use of nuclear weapons it would mean the end of life as we know it - but many nations are proceeding with their development programs anyway; and those that aren't - wish they were

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. *Where Can Wisdom Be Found?*

1. So, where are we to find wisdom today?
2. It seems there is no end of people who claim they have discovered the secrets of the universe & the meaning of life
3. I returned to Costco this week to once more cull the titles of some volumes promising to dispense wisdom: I found . . .
  - a. *Sun, Moon, & Stars* - an astrological source book
  - b. *Simple Abundance - A Day Book of Comfort & Joy*
  - c. *One Day My Soul Just Opened Up*
  - d. *Essential Koran - Essential Tibetan Buddhism - Essential Jesus*
  - e. *Making the Gods Work for You*
4. A couple books that have been hugely successful in recent years are
  - a. James Redfield's *The Celestine Prophecy* & the sequel - *The Tenth Insight*
  - b. Robert Fulghum's *All I Really Needed To Know I Learned In Kindergarten*
  - c. now, *The Celestine Prophecy* is simply nothing more than one man's wild invention and if Fulghum learned everything he needed to know in

Kindergarten, then either it was unlike any kindergarten I've ever encountered or he's lived a very sheltered life

5. No friends, as Job so eloquently shows, wisdom does not originate with man and he cannot discover it by investigation
6. Wisdom comes from God - He is it's source, and the only way to obtain it is to know and live for Him
7. God, in His infinite love and care for us has not played a game of hide & seek
8. He has given ample revelation of Himself in His Word: Both the written and the living
9. In Hebrews 1 we read:

**{1} God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,**

**{2} has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;**

- a. God wrapped wisdom in Human flesh when he sent His Son
  - b. Jesus is wisdom incarnate
  - c. in 1 Corinthians 1:24, Paul says that Jesus IS the wisdom of God
  - d. in Colossians 2:3, he says that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ
10. What Job could only look forward to, you and I get to have in fullness because of Jesus
  11. We don't have to admire wisdom from afar; we can possess it in Christ

## **B. Teach Us To Number Our Days**

1. Let me conclude with a question I asked earlier
2. How much of what you are pouring your life into is in the end just so much dust?
3. Are you really living for the things that last?
4. Are you living wisely
5. In Ephesians 5, Paul writes

**{15} See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,**

**{16} redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

**{17} Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is**

6. In Psalm 90:2 we read these words provocative words . . .

**Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

7. There was an article entitled, "If You Are 35, You Have 500 Days to Live."
  - a. its thesis was that when you subtract the time spent sleeping, working, tending to personal matters, hygiene, odd chores, medical matters, eating, traveling, and miscellaneous time-stealers,
  - b. in the next 36 years you will have roughly the equivalent of only 500 days left to spend as you wish.
  - c. that's left than a year and a half
8. Some of us here this morning are Christians who've put our faith in Christ and been born again
  - a. but we've poured our lives into the pursuit if things that are dust
  - b. we've chased after the wind



- c. instead of investing ourselves in pursuing God, we've sought wealth
  - d. time is short - and in the end, nothing matters more than knowing Jesus Christ and investing our lives in living for Him
9. Others of you have heard the gospel many times
- a. and in the back of your mind you know you really should commit your life to Christ
  - b. but you keep putting it off till later, for a more convenient time
  - c. but every time you resist the drawing of the Holy Spirit, your heart becomes a little bit harder - one day, He will stop striving with you
  - d. you KNOW wisdom demands you surrender to Jesus, but you resist
  - e. surrender today!