

## Wrestling With Reality Job 27-28

Over the past several weeks we have heard the many conversations that have taken place between Job and his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Last week we heard Bildad speak more of the same in his third speech and tonight we come to Job's final appeal to these men. The third round of conversation is over and the friends have said all they are going to say. We have heard them repeat the same argument that God punishes the wicked and therefore Job is wicked. This line of thinking has been on repeat. Job will now offer one final rebuttal and defense. It is this defense where we will spend tonight and next week. Specifically tonight we will hear Job rebuke his friends one final time and also speak of the wisdom of God.

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### I. Standing Firm (v.1-6)

Job begins this chapter with a fairly stern rebuke of his three friends. Actually what we see at the onset is an oath formula – "As God lives." You can interpret this as, as long as God lives (which is forever)...

Who has taken away my right and who has made my soul bitter – This is Job's way of saying who has done this to me or why am I in this predicament. Remember, Job's friends have made it repeatedly clear that Job has brought his situation upon himself as a result of his wickedness. Job has repeatedly pushed back on this idea and he does so again here. The point is, who has done this to me? God has! He is the one that is in control of my situation and He is the one who has chosen to bring all of these calamities upon me.

Next we see a continuation of this oath formula – "as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job is simply saying as long as I'm alive and the breath of God is in me (a nod to creation) this is what is going to happen...

I am not going to appease you – I know that this is what you want me to do but it aint happening. You so desperately want to be right and I am not going to give you the pleasure of you thinking you are right. My integrity means more to me than that.

I know that I am blameless and upright (and we know it as well based on Job 1 and 2). I know it and I will cling to it until my dying breath. I will not cater to you and accept your argument. I'm not going to do it because it isn't true! I will not choose to live with a guilty conscience (my heart does not reproach me for any of my days).

### II. A Curse (v.7-10)

It's almost as if you can feel Job getting riled up here. I think that what follows is proof of that as Job's emotions begin to take over. (This isn't good)

What we see is Job essentially curse his friends.

He tells them: This is how you have described the wicked and what is due them – how they are treated by God. My heart desires that these things be done to you. YOU are my enemy.

Did you really come to console me or to provide support? The reality is that you seem to be against me. That is what your actions say, so are you really any different than the wicked that you have described?

My desire is that God cut you off. Then you will know what it is like to be hopeless. God won't hear your cry. After all, your heart doesn't appear to be chasing after God so may you be dealt with as such! That is my honest desire!

### III. God's Power and Treatment of the Wicked (v.11-23)

Job continues on his rant – some could reasonably argue it is an attack – on his friends. Recently both Bildad and Job have spoken about the power of God and Job will continue here. He desires to teach something to his friends and to get one main point across.

In verse 11, Job begins by saying: Let me really teach you about the power of God. To be quite honest, I don't know how you have missed it – BUT, I do know you don't understand the power of God or you would have quit talking a long time ago.

What follows in verses 13-23 is very interesting because much of what Job says is simply a repeat of what Job's three friends have already said. I believe what this reveals is:

- To some degree, Job does agree with what they say – God does punish the wicked
- Job has even recognized over the course of their conversations that it sometimes seems as though God doesn't punish the wicked right away, but regardless punishment does come at some point.

Job's emphasis does appear to be – You guys can quit talking about this, I get it and we agree on a lot of it.

I recognize that the wicked:

- May have a large family, but they will ultimately suffer and have a difficult life
- May be wealthy but ultimately it will all be taken away
- Their apparent success is only temporary, they have no real foundation to stand on
- At some point will be terrified of God's wrath
- At some point they are eventually overtaken

Job understands all of this and so do his friends. The problem is that it appears as though Job is being treated the same. Therefore, Job's friends make the assumption that Job is wicked. They don't understand the power of God and how or why He uses it when He does. I think that is the point that Job is trying to make here. It would seem as though I am wicked and that is a simple explanation but God isn't simple – we don't understand him. That is exactly where Job is going to take us next. Man believes he understands so much when in reality he understands very little. Job will make this point by speaking of the wisdom of God.

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Job is confused. He understands that God punishes the wicked in His own time and yet he seems to be receiving the same treatment while he is an upright and blameless man. It doesn't make sense. In those times, Job has previously spoken about trusting God anyway as He is sovereign and blameless. "Though He slay me, I will trust in Him."

Simply put, that is very difficult to do and Job acknowledges that. God is the personification of Wisdom and yet Job shares with us in this chapter that true wisdom is hard to find.

### I. Human Discovery (v.1-6)

Job begins by pointing to the remarkable discoveries of man. Primarily he talks about precious metals. They are not easy to find. Job tells us there are mines for silver and for gold and yet they are not out in the open. It takes some hard work to discover. Specifically, Job tells us that these things are taken out of the earth. Job adds copper and iron to the list.

Job's point is that all of this takes great effort and work and yet man finds a way to seek these things out. In reality, there is not much hidden from man when he puts his mind to it. Job continues this point by telling us that "man puts an end to darkness." These metals are hard to find and one must dig deep down into the Earth – darkness and danger doesn't stop him – He sets his heart to find them and he does. Man also splits open the Earth to find these things. This appears to be a very specific and detailed account of mining, even in Job's day. What is remarkable is that from our view on Earth (above ground) one may never realize the treasures that are beneath it.

A couple of things come to mind here.

- A. Man was given dominion over the Earth in Genesis
- B. Genesis 11:6 (tower of Babel)

Just think about our modern technological advances – think about things that were not imaginable 5 years ago. Men have the capability to do some really remarkable things and that is Job's main point here.

### II. Human Capacity (v.7-11)

In these verses, Job points out the superiority of mankind to the animal kingdom. \*This is a passage that needs to be sent to PETA!

All of these treasures beneath the Earth that Job just spoke of, the animals have no knowledge of – neither the birds or lions. And yet, Man can start fires, cut through the mountains, and he knows of and seeks out these treasures. He can stop the flow of water or redirect it for his purposes and he can bring hidden things to light. It is quite remarkable.

Underneath the surface here, this passage should remind us strongly of Genesis 1:27. Mankind was made in the image of God. He is God's representative on Earth. He has been given many great abilities and authorities – this is not a gift given to the animal kingdom. There is something distinct in mankind. It is not something to hide or run from but a responsibility to embrace!

### III. Human Failure (v.12-22)

Now Job comes back around to the topic at hand – true wisdom. Mankind can do some mighty things but their greatest shortfall is failure to understand, recognize, and find true wisdom.

Job clearly states that man doesn't know its worth. This is such a statement for our times. We have turned our back on true wisdom and as we have done with so many other things, we have redefined it. We claim to have wisdom but it is a lie – we don't have it and don't desire it.

Job says that true wisdom isn't found in the land of the living. I believe he is speaking of the fleshly/worldly physical world. It cannot be found there and yet mankind spends the majority of his days seeking for it there. He looks for it in all the wrong places!

All of these places that mankind has discovered all of these treasures – they don't contain true wisdom. True wisdom also cannot be bought. Men make a great importance out of financial gain and yet it has no bearing on true wisdom. You cannot value it in gold, cash, or any form of currency or precious jewels.

Job asks the question (rhetorically), if this be the case, then where does wisdom come from. Again, he reminds us that it is not found in the land of the living – this physical world.

### IV. God's Providence (v.23-28)

Job's argument is that the only way to true wisdom is through God. He alone knows where it can be found. Think of Proverbs 9:10 – "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

God is the one that looks over all the earth (physical world) and all the heavens (spiritual world). He created the Earth, the seas, and the wind. He is over all of the natural processes that take place. He schedules them and puts them into place.

Verse 29 takes us back to Proverbs 9:10 – Job himself declares that God told man that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

This is a fascinating passage of Scripture that serves a couple of purposes. First it serves as a pep talk for Job. He is frustrated and doesn't understand why his life looks the way it does. He knows God is in control even when He cannot see or feel it and yet he still must remind himself of this fact.

Second, this is another rebuke of his three friends. Where have they declared wisdom to be found? Tradition, Experience, and the ways of man – all the wrong places. Only recently have they mentioned to Job that they trust in God's law and word.

This passage should also serve as a reminder to us to seek out our Creator. He created us in the image of God – as His representative. He has given us amazing talents, intellect, and skills that allow us to live productive lives (just like those Job mentioned seeking out treasure) and yet what is really important and the key to full life is true wisdom that is only found in Him. Why is it only found in Him, because it IS HIM! You and I were made with one great purpose in mind – to be in relationship with God. Anything outside of that is settling for less. Job is reminding himself (and us) of that fact and that when times are difficult we are to run to God instead of away from Him.

## Personal Implications

1. Stand Firm
2. Emotions Lead You Off Course
3. Living With Eternity In Mind
4. Searching For True Wisdom