

Out of the Storm

A Study of Job

Part – 7 – “Will God Answer?”

Job 28

“Chapter 28 shows that behind all the other questions is the basic one of the place of wisdom which lies behind creation itself, and thus this chapter is a metaphor for the entire book.”

- Robert Fyall from Now My Eyes Have Seen You (p. 66)

Structure:

There is an easily discernable three-fold structure to chapter 28:

- The search for wisdom is like mining for treasure (1-11)
- Wisdom is inaccessible (12-22)
- The connection between wisdom and the mysteries of creation (23-28)

This three-fold structure mirrors, in a way, the structure of the entire book. *The first section* (1-11) with its metaphor of mining reminds us of Job’s suffering. The mine is a dark and often dangerous place as some of the images in verses 1-11 suggest. The mining image becomes a metaphor for Job’s search for wisdom – an understanding of what lies behind creation which will explain his predicament. *The second section* (12-22) explains the ultimate inaccessibility of the very knowledge Job seeks. Such knowledge is of tremendous value and so the search for it is inevitable. But the quest for such knowledge always leads to a frustrating end. *The third section* (23-28) turns our attention away from the search for wisdom and fixes our gaze instead on the God who rules his creation in ways that are often a riddle to us.



Are These Job’s Words?

The tone of chapter 28 is in great contrast to the rest of Job’s speech. While Job’s speeches up to this point and continuing in chapter 29 are filled with passion and pain, chapter 28 is distinguished by its calm and lack of complaint. This has led many commentators to speculate that these are the words of a narrator rather than those of Job. It is my (Todd) opinion that chapter 28 is a poetic interlude composed by the narrator setting the stage for and pointing to the ultimate theme of God’s words (38-42).

Main Idea: Though Job desperately desired to know why he was suffering his answers would not be found in discerning the mysteries of creation but in continuing to fear the Lord and turn from evil.

A Word About Wisdom:

In Job 28 wisdom refers to that knowledge concerning the order of creation. It is to understand how the created order works. Wisdom acknowledges design and purpose in creation. Therefore Job seeks hard after this wisdom. He seeks to understand why the seeming randomness of his suffering has occurred within a well ordered and purposeful universe.

1. The Desperate Search (Vv. 1-11)

- The Hebrew participle translated “surely” is a transitional word building upon what has gone before. The writer is transitioning from what has gone before to a new stage of drama. By the end of the chapter the writer will be directly anticipating the content of God’s response.
- The mine imagery is significant given Job’s circumstances. A mine is a deep, mysterious, and often dangerous place. The calamity which has befallen Job has much in common with the characteristics of a mine. Job has been plunged into darkness and danger. He is alone. He is disoriented in the dark. And yet it is in the darkness and danger of the mine where the most precious treasures are uncovered.

2. The Frustrating Realization (Vv. 12-22)

- There is no doubt that there is priceless value to knowing how the universe fits together, how it works, its moral structure. And suffering believers long more than anyone else to have this knowledge. This knowledge of how the universe works will answer the question “Why?” Job reasons that if he can truly grasp the deepest workings of the created order he will finally know why such calamity has come his way.
- However the search for this knowledge, while understandable, is ultimately futile. We will search for such answers because that sort of knowledge is precious beyond imagining. The problem is that such knowledge is beyond us.

3. The Humbling Reality (Vv. 23-28)

- In this final section wisdom is scarcely mentioned. Instead, the focus is on God and his power over the created order. Only God can truly possess the sort of wisdom that Job (and many other sufferers) is seeking (vv. 23-24). Only God can know how the universe works for He made and upholds it. We may as well try to understand where the wind comes from or to control the rain and lightning (vv. 25-27). And while this knowledge is too great for us, the One who does know invites us to know Him.
- V. 28 – This is the first time we hear the words of God since the opening narrative. And how we respond to God’s words is a litmus test for our hearts. God is directing our gaze away from the quest for answers toward Himself. Here is a call to turn away from a demand to understand why to resting in the knowledge of who God is.
- The search described in chapter 28 is a search for sight. It is a search to solve all the mysteries of living in a fallen world. But God calls us to live by faith. He calls us away from sin. He calls us to fear Him which is precisely where true wisdom begins. In chapter 28 we see that there is a wisdom that man seeks which differs from the wisdom that God calls us to. The former is a knowledge that is ultimately hidden from us; a knowledge of the mysteries of the universe. The latter wisdom is that which is found in walking by faith and not by sight. It is that which is had by seeking the Lord, our Maker and Redeemer.