

JOB: Man Of God  
July 31, 2005  
Message 5  
Scripture reading Job 28:1-12

INTRO: Let me take you back to the beginning of the book of Job. (Read 1:1 then 1:6-7). Do you remember that I asked why God did not leave well enough alone? Why look for trouble by reminding the devil of Job's good life? Do you remember that we said that God was ahead of the devil a long way, even at this time.

And now Job has lost all his possessions. He has lost his health. And now he is debating with his friends who have come to tell him that he is suffering because he is a very wicked man. Eliphaz addressed Job three times and Job has answered each time. Bildad has just finished his third round, and Job is about to answer him. The arguments of Job's friends have gotten shorter and Job's answers are getting longer. His answer to Bildad and then his three friends is six chapters long, and it is like a knockout punch in a boxing match, or a score in overtime in a hockey game.

b. Bildad continued (25:1-6)

-Job's answer to Bildad

(Read 26:1-4.) Job is a hard book to interpret in many passages and I would by no means want to make you think I understand it all in the intended way. But I think this passage is a reproof from Job, an older wiser man, to a man whom he views as totally incapable of being his counselor. I think this passage could begin like this, "Bildad, Bildad, it is time you realized your place How have you helped him who is without power. You haven't. I have. How have you saved the arm that has no strength? You haven't, but let me tell you I have done that many times. How have you counseled one who has no wisdom? You haven't. I have. How have you declared sound advice to many? You haven't, but I have. To whom have you uttered words and whose spirit came from you? You haven't done these things but I have."

In 26:5-14, as I understand it, Job will show to Bildad that he needs to observe nature and learn about God from that. Now consider this. I think, as do many others, that Job is the oldest book in the Bible. When Job wrote, Genesis had not yet been written. Genesis was written around 2500 years after creation. And so much emphasis was laid on learning about God from nature. The book of Job is full of examples. We will see a few this morning.

Now is it true, that we can learn about God from nature? Turn to Romans 1:20 (read), "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead..." We will see both Job and God using nature to teach some of the great attributes of God.

Now look at verse 7. It gives two huge scientific facts not known from science until recently. First Job says that God stretches out the north over empty space. Scientists have learned in recent years that there is an empty cone shaped space over the north pole. There are literally zillions of stars in space. And yet, in that space over the north, there are very few stars. It is empty space. Now this is an incredible statement in Job.

Notice second, in verse 7, that Job says God, "...hangs the earth on nothing." What did the people in Job's day believe? Harold Willmington says that at the time Job wrote, the most advanced theories were that the world was flat and that it rested on the back of a turtle that was slowly plodding through a cosmic sea of some sort (pg. 100). He further adds that the scientific world did not recognize the facts of this Scripture until 1687!

Verse 10 is variously translated. The KJV says, "He hath compassed the waters with bounds..." But the NKJV says, "He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters." The JFB commentary says, "Rather, 'He hath drawn a circular bound round

the waters'..." In other words, it appears Job is saying that the earth is round. Did the Bible know that so many years ago, before man even dreamed of such a possibility? (See Pr. 8:27; Is. 40:22). Again, the scientific accuracy of such facts was not known until recently.

Then in verse 14 Job says that these things he has declared are the mere edges of God's ways. This is beginner's material. And then he adds, "...how small a whisper we hear of Him!" Job recognized even then that man knew but a very small fraction of God's ways. What would he say today, with such amazing discoveries as DNA?

We saw earlier in Romans 1 that we can learn the invisible attributes of God from creation. Now let me remind us of something. It is highly likely that when Job lived there was no written Scripture. And he studied God from creation. Today we have not only nature, but we have the entire Word of God, all 66 books. And we need to study them. There is a teaching abroad that we should not study the Bible too much because the more we know the more we are accountable for. According to Bishop Trench, there is a sin called the sin of ignorance. It is not knowing that which we ought to have known. I think there is a sin of omission which is not reading and studying the Bible as we ought. I believe for all who can read, it is an obligation to read and study the Bible. Let me encourage you that if you do not have a regular habit of reading the Bible, to seek to put that in place. You say, "I read, but I don't get much out of it." Read and seek to understand. Read, read, read. God will in the long run begin to put it together for you. It is evident that Job, who likely had no Bible, sought as much as possible to know God through creation.

Thus, having answered Bildad, we come to chapter 27 where Job will now answer all three of his friends. And it seems he does so with a degree of bitterness. He begins in 27:2 with these words, "As God lives, who has taken away my justice, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter..." He could have said, "As God lives..." and then went

on to verse 3. But he found it necessary to describe this God that he was talking about. Which one is it? The Creator of the universe? The one who hangs the earth on nothing? No, it is the God who has taken away my justice. "I am righteous. There is no reason why I should endure such tragedies, but God won't listen. He gives me no hearing. He has taken away my justice." What he is saying is how God is treating him is not fair. I wonder, do you feel like that about something? That means we think God does not really know what is going on, or He does not really care.

Then Job describes this God as the Almighty, but He is the Almighty "...who has made my soul bitter." When I come to the conclusion that I have been treated unfairly, it creates a feeling of injustice which brings about anger. That anger is the feeling of resentment that comes between me and the one I think has wronged me. Henry Teichrobe, who used to work with the Sutera Twins, said that bitterness is the response to pride that has been thwarted. Lou Sutera said that bitterness is anger in the deep freeze, and he added that the rebellious shall dwell in a dry land. Bitterness is a very hard weed to get rid of, and the very first step to deliverance is to acknowledge that I am bitter.

Now let us read 27:2-6. Job is saying, "As God lives and as long as I live, I will not relent and say you are right. Till I die, I will hold fast that I am righteous, and I will not let go." Now let me summarize the rest of the chapter. Job begins by saying in verse 7, "May my enemy be like the wicked..." Then he explains that though in this life the wicked may prosper, yet in the end the wicked have no hope. And not only that, but when all is said and done, "the just will wear the clothes the ungodly have piled up, and the innocent will divide his silver" (17).

We go now to chapter 28 where Job will make a tremendous revelation with regard to wisdom. In 28:1-11 Job explains that there is a place where anything that exists can be found (read 28:1-2).

Everything that exists can be found somewhere. For example, I have dug down six feet on our land and found no gold. It is not a place where gold is found. But years ago I was hired by several men who owned a small gold claim in Northern B.C. I trucked my machine many miles north. When I could go no further by truck, I unloaded the machine and drove it many more miles on an old road filled with mud holes and no bridges. And there I came to Tom Creek. Here at Tom Creek gold miners had mined years ago. There was a place where a town had once been that had had over 2500 people. Now it was all overgrown by trees and you would never have said that there had ever been a town.

On the claim these men had, were piles of rocks that Chinese workers had taken out of the creek to mine the creek bed. One of my jobs was to move the rock piles to mine remove the dirt until we hit bedrock, and there in the bedrock was gold. The surface of the bedrock had become softer from lying in the water and ice for many years. I would dig into the bedrock as far as I could and the miners would sluice this broken rock and take out the gold. When the hard bedrock was exposed, they would take water hoses and wash off the rock and there in the cracks in places would be small pieces of gold. You cannot find gold on my land, but there are still places where gold is found.

And so Job explains in 1-11 that any thing that exists can be found some place. And now here is Job's question in verse 12, "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?" Is there anyone here this morning that can tell us where wisdom is found and where is the place where understanding is found?

Now Job will come at that question from another direction. How valuable is wisdom? (Read 28:13-19.) Two questions: First, where is wisdom? Answer, no one knows. Second, how valuable is wisdom? Answer, no one knows. So verse 20 asks again, "From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?" The answer

comes in verse 23, "God understands its way and He knows its place."

As I understand these verses, Job will now first show where God's wisdom can be found, and then what true wisdom is for man and where it can be found. God's wisdom may be seen in nature. Job will use air, water and lightning for his example of the wisdom of God as seen in nature. In verse 24 Job says that God looks to the ends of the earth and sees under the whole heavens. The whole heavens is a region so large that man, who can now see immeasurable distances has not come to the end of the heavens.

But in verse 25 he says that God establishes the weight of the wind. Does air have weight? Listen to this comment from Adam Clarke, "*To make the weight for the winds* God has given an atmosphere to the earth, which, possessing a certain degree of *gravity* perfectly suited to the necessities of all animals, plants, vegetables, and fluids, is the cause in his hand of preserving animal and vegetative life through the creation; for by it the *blood* circulates in the veins of animals, and the *juices* in the tubes of vegetables. Without this *pressure* of the atmosphere, there could be no respiration; and the *elasticity* of the particles of air included in animal and vegetable bodies, without this superincumbent pressure, would rupture the vessels in which they are contained, and destroy both kinds of life. So exactly is this *weight of the winds* or *atmospheric air* proportioned to the necessities of the globe, that we find it in the mean neither too *light* to prevent the undue *expansion* of animal and vegetable tubes, nor too *heavy* to *compress* them so as to prevent due circulation."

Then Job shows that though, air is lighter than water, yet water evaporates, becomes lighter than air, formulates water in the air and rains on the earth. The incredible wisdom of God is demonstrated over and over again in nature, even in seemingly simple things.

So in verse 26 Job says God made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunder bolt. When lightning happens, it makes a path through the light air and it is that which creates thunder. The Encyclopedia Britannica says that thunder is the, "...sound that follows and is caused by a lightning discharge. The discharge heats and expands the air around it and forms a compression

wave that is heard as thunder. The return stroke of the lightning flash produces a much louder sound than does the leader, because it transmits a more powerful flow of current."

So God's wisdom is to be seen in His creation, but what of man's wisdom, where is it to be seen? We go now to verse 28 (read).

Some time ago I did a message on the fear of the Lord. Let me quote just a bit of that message: "Now our text tells us that the fear of the Lord is a good thing. (That text was Psalm 111:10 which says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...") It leads men to wisdom. So it is necessary that we define what this fear of the Lord is. It is a most common thing to hear people say that the fear of the Lord is awe for the Lord. It is common to substitute awesomeness for the fear of the Lord. I think that what that does is it numbs us to the real meaning. We make it less shocking, and thereby less powerful. There is a Greek word translated fear, that speaks of this awe and is found in Hebrews 5:7 and 12:28. But this is not the word used in the phrases, "the fear of the Lord" or "the fear of God".

The Hebrew word for fear is *yirah*. It is the normal word used for fear, like fear from a bear or maniac etc... It is that which causes one to tremble or shake. It is plain and simple fear (See Ex. 1:17). The Hebrew midwives were afraid to kill the newborn babies because they feared God. They knew if they killed little babies, in God's eyes they would be murderers and they would face the judgement of God. The parallel word in the NT is *phobia* which we will look at later."

How do I know if I fear God? Proverbs 16:6 says, "...by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil." I will be able to tell by how easily I live in sin. Job 1:1 says that Job feared God and shunned evil. That is what the fear causes us to shun evil. I believe the Bible is quite clear that there are degrees of sin. Is it worse to murder one person than to murder ten? Of course it is.

Is it worse to rob a bank than it is to speed down the highway? Of course it is.

Now I simply cannot imagine myself committing murder. Not at all. I can see how I might be tempted into stretching the truth. Well then, how about obeying the laws of the land such as speeding, or stop signs? Oh, is that even wrong? Now there are degrees of sin. And I might check my life and see how much do I fear God. Well, I fear Him enough never to even think about killing someone, but do I fear Him enough to obey the laws of the land?

So Job has explained where wisdom can be found. It is found in the fear of the Lord. Maybe Job is advising his counselors that they do not fear God as they ought.

CONCL: So Job has answered Bildad and said, "So you want to be my counselor. Well, before you can counsel someone, you must learn to know God and His ways." Job had learned to know God through many aspects of nature. That is learning from the world book. We would do well to study the world book as well. But today we have the entire Word of God, and that is the Word book. I challenge each of us this morning to not only read, but study the Word of God.

I think in chapter 27 he then answers his three friends and says, "As long as God lives and I live, I will not agree with your conclusion that I am suffering for sin. I am righteous and this I will maintain. There is no use for you to argue with me." And his concluding thought is that the wicked can lay up all kinds of wealth, but in the end it does them no good. And in the end, the righteous will take over.

And in chapter 28, the chapter on wisdom, he is saying, "Let me tell you where wisdom may be found and how valuable it is." And having done that, maybe his intention is that his friends ought to learn to fear God a little more. But there is a message for us in the fear of the Lord. The true fear of God will cause us to obey the Word of God and depart from evil.

Maybe we ought to make a scale for ourselves. Take all the sins we come into contact with and then order them where we

think they come in the list. We could call this scale, "The Fear Factor."

And maybe in the bottom we would have things like stretching the truth or speeding down the highway, or shooting moose out of season. Then we could have things like little lies or stealing little things. Then we might have things like dressing immodestly, or nakedness or wearing our hair in ways the Bible teaches against. Maybe we could have jewelrey or excessive jewelry on this list. Maybe we could put fornication, adultery, jealousy, envy; maybe we could put them in their place. Where would we put shady business dealings? Or cheating in business or on our tax forms? Well, just maybe we ought to make a list and put all these things down, call it Fear Factor and then sit down and evaluate: How much do I fear God?

And then we might ask: Am I a man of understanding? And we would not take an IQ test. We could go to this list and say, "Which ones have I departed from?" And there we would know if we were people of understanding.

Let us have a moment of prayer. Let each of us ask God to help us evaluate how wise and how understanding we are.