

The 28th chapter of Job is without doubt one of the most beautiful chapters in the entire Bible. It's a chapter about wisdom. Perhaps the biggest difficulty in chapter 28, is to understand how it relates to chapter 27. If you remember, within chapter 27 Job described the religion of the hypocrite, which is a person who claims to be wise but is actually a fool.

Thus, having described the hypocrite who claims to be wise, he now describes the source and nature of true wisdom. He likely even has his three friends in mind. "Look, you guys claim to be wise but are actually fools. But this can change if you humble yourselves before God, and seek true wisdom as man seeks treasure."

I. Its Neglect (vv1-11)

II. Its Value (vv12-19)

III. Its Source (vv20-28)

I. Its Neglect (vv1-11)

1. The primary purpose of verses 1-11 is to underscore how man goes to great lengths for earthly riches but neglects true riches.
2. Man goes to great lengths to obtain riches from this earth—silver, gold, iron, copper, and precious stones.
3. V3—"Man puts an end to darkness and searches every recess for ore in the darkness and the shadow of death."
4. He risks life and limb for the riches found in the earth—he digs mines and dams up rivers, in search of riches.
5. Such places are beyond the sight of the falcon (v7) and even the fearless lion hasn't travelled on them (v8).
6. V9—"He puts his hand on the flint; he overturns the mountains at the roots"—he goes through rock and mountain.
7. V10—"He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eye sees every precious thing"—that is every precious metal and gem.
8. In other words, the entire earth is a treasury, and man by nature goes to great lengths to mine its riches.
9. (1) The earth is filled with natural treasure and riches—we will never be able to fully grasp the riches found beneath our feet.
10. (2) Man spends himself in pursuit of temporal riches—that is, he spends all of his time and energy on what fades away.
11. Derek Thomas—"Man's evident skill and cleverness, even his persistence, are self-evident. Men were prepared to be killed in the search for precious metals and gem-stones, searching 'the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness' (v3). His skill outwitted even the 'falcon' and the 'lion'. No other creature is as curious, courageous or clever as man."
12. And yet, as we shall see from the next section, while man spends himself in pursuing temporal riches, he neglects and despises true riches.

II. Its Value (vv12-19)

1. The primary purpose of verses 12-19 is to underscore how more valuable wisdom is over earthly riches.
2. Let me just say before going further, that several statements in vv12-28 are found in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

3. This means, either Solomon was quoting Job or else, these statements were broadly known proverbs.
4. V12—"But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding"—these are closely related terms.
5. Perhaps we can distinguish them this way—wisdom refers to skill and understanding to discernment.
6. Wisdom refers to the ability of applying truth and understanding refers to the ability of discerning truth.
7. We understand the truth and apply it properly—thus, it's important to keep these two concepts together.
8. Wisdom is always connected with understanding—the reason we live right is because we think right.
9. Thus, while we can and distinguish these two, wisdom and understanding, Job is using them as synonymous.
10. Joseph Caryl—"Wheresoever wisdom is, there is understanding; and wheresoever a right understanding is, there is wisdom, and as these two are inseparable companions, so they are often put the one for the other."
11. Thus, true wisdom could be simply defined as the ability to think and live in a way that honors and pleases God.
12. Now, we will learn at the end of this chapter, where this wisdom is found, or how this wisdom is obtained.
13. But at present, just keep in mind it concerns both a way of thinking and living that honors and pleases God.
14. Thus, it becomes evident that the wisdom and understanding referred to are not worldly wisdom and understanding.
15. This is the entire point of vv1-11—man has plenty of wisdom and understanding when it comes to earthly riches.
16. He's wiser and has more understanding than the beast of the air and field—he knows the value and place of earthly riches.
17. V13—"Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living"—that is, true wisdom and understanding.
18. Native man doesn't know its value or worth—he's blinded by the glamor of earthy riches and treasure.
19. (1) True wisdom is of matchless worth—true wisdom is of greater value than all the riches of this world combined.
20. Prov.3:13-18—"Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom, and the man *who* gains understanding; for her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She *is* more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days *is* in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace. She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy *are all* who retain her (4:5-9).
21. Notice how Solomon also couples together wisdom and understanding (but he speaks of them as one—'wisdom...understanding...her').
22. She basically brings two blessings—in her right hand is "length of days" and in her left hand "riches and honor."
23. (2) True wisdom isn't found in the created—the NT repeatedly refers to a wisdom of this world that is carnal.
24. There is a wisdom found in the created—there is a wisdom that man can obtain apart from God's revelation.

25. James, in chapter 3:15, describes this as "the wisdom from below" that is "earthly, sensual, and demonic."
26. And Paul, in 1Corinthians 1:20, spoke of "the wisdom of this world" in contrast to "the wisdom of God."
27. Thus, the wisdom that Job is describing, isn't learned in the University or even Seminary, it's learned from God.
28. You can be educated at the finest University or best Seminary, and for all that, remain an educated fool.
29. This is the meaning of Rom.1:22—"Professing to be wise, they become fools"—their wisdom was worldly.
30. For example, think of all these professors at these high-end schools, teaching humanistic secularism (nothing but educated fools).
31. And yet, in contrast to that, you could have dropped out of the 8th grade and be wiser than them all combined.
32. When our children were young, we taught them the Children's Catechism, and after they learned the first question I used to say, they were smarter than most professors teaching in Universities and Seminaries (Q. Who made you? A. God).

III. Its Source (vv20-28)

1. The primary purpose of verses 20-28 is to underscore the fact, that only God knows where and what wisdom is.
2. Verses 20-22 repeat similar themes found in vv12-19—wisdom and understanding are hidden from the eyes of all living (v21).
3. Even "Destruction and Death" have heard about wisdom and understanding, but don't know where they're from (v22).
4. By "Destruction and Death" is meant the grave, and is in contrast to "the eyes of all the living" in v21.
5. That is, no one or thing within creation knows where wisdom is found—it's hidden and concealed from them (vv23-28 divide into three sections).
6. (1) God knows where wisdom is, v23—"God understands its way, and He knows its place"—He knows what wisdom is and where it's found.
7. While wisdom is hidden from all created things, it's wide open to the all-seeing and knowing eyes of God.
8. Now in the strict sense, wisdom isn't something that's separate from God—remember, God and His attributes are one.
9. There isn't God and then wisdom (as they were two things)—God is wisdom as He is also understanding.
10. But I think, as we shall see when we get to v28, Job is speaking about "a wisdom from God for man."
11. Let me lay all my cards on the table—God knows where wisdom is found, because He put it somewhere, we can get it.
12. Thus, while God's essential wisdom is in Him perfectly (and He never shares that with anyone), there is a wisdom from God whereby man can become wise (and that's in the gospel of God).
13. (2) Why God knows where wisdom is—within vv24-27 Job explains why God knows the nature and location of wisdom.
14. V24—"For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole heavens"—He sees and knows everything.

15. And then from v25 to v27 he describes the creation of a thunderstorm—wind, water, rain, and thunderbolt.
16. Job uses His work within creation, as one reason why God alone knows what wisdom is and where it's found.
17. Only God knows what true wisdom is and where it's located, because only God is natively and perfectly wise.
18. Job 12:13—"To God belong wisdom and power, counsel and understanding are His"—they belong Him in the fullest sense.
19. Thus, Job is merely giving us an illustration of God's wisdom and understanding as displayed in creation.
20. He knows how much wind and water are needed—He made a law for the rain and path for the thunderbolt.
21. Let me put it this way—the reason God knows where wisdom is found, is because He alone put it there.
22. All wisdom comes from Him—and again remember, while we do not share in His essential wisdom, we do partake of a wisdom from God.
23. (3) God reveals or identifies where wisdom is, v28—"And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'"
24. Before I come to explain this verse, I want to suggest two things about the phrase "And to man He said."
25. (a) It reminds us that wisdom is revealed from God to man—because He alone knows it's nature and location, He alone can reveal to man what it is and where to find it.
26. If God never revealed what and where wisdom is, man never would have found it—"It is hidden from the eyes all living."
27. Thus, God had to speak to man—He had to reveal to man the truth about wisdom—otherwise, he would have remained foolish.
28. 1Cor.2:7—"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory."
29. Notice Paul also describes himself as "speaking"—"we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery"—a Biblical mystery is something that needs revealing.
30. This mystery is nothing other than the gospel—the way in which natively foolish sinners can be made wise.
31. (b) It reminds us that wisdom is experienced by man—"And to man He said"—in other words, v28 describes how wisdom looks as known by man.
32. This is how a truly wise person looks and acts—this is how we know who is wise and who is foolish.
33. Some of you may remember the distinction we make between God's communicable and noncommunicable attributes.
34. That is, God's noncommunicable attributes are those that man does not share (even in the least bit – self-existence, infinity, etc.)
35. And yet there are other attributes that we partake of, such as holiness, love, mercy, patience, and wisdom.
36. But, and this is very important to keep in mind, while these are communicated to us in ways, we never partake of His essential holiness, love, mercy, patience, or wisdom.
37. No, these resemble the divine attributes, but they are intended for the created and do not make us Creators.
38. Thus, in closing, I want to answer three related questions—What does it mean to fear God; How is fearing God true wisdom; How is true wisdom obtained?

39. Question 1—What does it mean to fear God? "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom"—wise people fear God.
40. Put another way—true wisdom consists in fearing God—to fear God is the essence of what wisdom is.
41. What does it mean to fear God? Well, simply put, to fear God is to know who God is—to know and fear God are the same things.
42. Prov.2:4-5—"If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom."
43. Prov.9:10—"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."
44. In both of the verses, Solomon equates fearing God and knowing God (because they are the same things).
45. To fear God is to know God, and to know God is to fear God—knowing and fearing God are synonymous.
46. Thus, the next question might become—how does a person know God, or what does knowing God entail?
47. Well, that's a very good question, and the simply answer is this—in order to know God, you have to know yourself.
48. You have to know yourself as a fallen, sinful, redeemed and forgiven creature, in and for the sake of Christ.
49. Everyone of these is essential if we are to have gospel fear—or that fear that's the beginning of wisdom.
50. To put it plain—gospel fear is bringing together our knowledge of God as sinful redeemed creatures.
51. It's to bring all that God is in and of Himself, to bear upon all that we are, as fallen and redeemed sinners.
52. But before I come to my second question, let me ask this—why does Job place such weight upon the grace of fear?
53. Well, Job is merely doing what Scripture often does, and that is, reduce all our piety down to this single grace of fear.
54. This means that within the notion of fearing of God is included all other graces such as trust, delight, and love.
55. Ecc.12:13—"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all."
56. Jer.32:40—"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me."
57. Rom.3:18—"There is no fear of God before their eyes"00this is why they think and act they way they do.
58. Question 2—How is fearing God true wisdom? Well, remember our definition of true wisdom (true wisdom is the ability to think and live in a way that honors and pleases God).
59. This means, there is a direct connection between fearing God and the way we think and the way we live.
60. (a) Those who fear God tremble at His word, Isa.66:2—"On this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."
61. Christians tremble at every part of His word—His warnings, commandments, and promises—we tremble at His word.
62. A person who fails to tremble before the holy word of God is a fool and very far from having true wisdom.

63. These people who twist God's word so as to make it say whoever the world thinks it should say, are fools.
64. If you twist Scripture so as to deny creation, Biblical sexuality and genderism, then you are far from wisdom.
65. (b) Those who fear God hate and forsake sin, v28—"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."
66. Prov.3:7—"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil" Prov.16:6—"by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil (Ps.34:11-14; Prov.14:26-27)."
67. Why do they hate and forsake sin? But because they are wise—they see sin for what is it (destructive to man and dishonoring to God).
68. (c) Those who fear God fear nothing else—those who fear God are bold for God—they fear nothing else.
69. Most Christians fear suffering affliction and rejection—that is, we fear man, Prov.29:25—"The fear of man brings a snare."
70. But the fear of God drives all other fears from us, 2Tim.1:7—"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."
71. Matt.10:28—"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
72. Now, remember, Christ did tell His disciples to fear hell (that is, fear they may go there), but fear the God of hell.
73. They are to fear God as the God of hell—as the God will destroy the wicked both body and soul in hell.
74. Question 3—How is true wisdom obtained? Well, as we've learned from Job 28, wisdom belongs to God.
75. But here's the problem—God is above and beyond us—how are we to get to God in order to find wisdom?
76. Well, here's the good news—God doesn't expect us to travel to heaven to somehow get wisdom from Him.
77. He has actually come down to man in the person of His Son, in whom He has deposited true wisdom.
78. Think of it like this—just as He has put temporal treasure within the earth, true treasure walked the earth.
79. Col.2:3—"In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"—this is where God has placed wisdom.
80. 1Cor.2:7—"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory."
81. Eph.1:7-8—"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding."
82. In fact, wisdom is so much identified with Christ, that Scripture often refers to Him as wisdom itself (He is our wisdom).