

## **In Search Of Wisdom**

### **Job 28:1-28**

#### **Introduction**

In chapter 26 Job spoke of God's power. In chapter 27 Job questioned God's power. Now in chapter 28 Job seeks God's wisdom. Job wants to know where true wisdom—God's wisdom comes from! "Where shall wisdom be found?" (v.12). "Where does wisdom dwell?" (v.20 NIV).

Real pain, constant pain, uninterrupted suffering will make one weary of cliché's and platitudes.

In this portion of Job's speech we discover that you cannot mine wisdom like the precious ore of the earth (vv.1-11). You cannot go to the wisdom super-mall and purchase wisdom (vv.12-19). It would appear that true wisdom has as its source the one true and living God (vv.20-28).

In this chapter Job seems to wear the garb of poet and philosopher and prophet.

#### **Mining For Wisdom (vv.1-11)**

*Job 28:1–28 (NKJV) 1 "Surely there is a mine for silver, And a place where gold is refined.*

Job reminds us that human beings have found amazing ways to find and extract precious metals from the earth.

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

Scholars are divided over the beginning of mining and smelting ore.

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

When something is really valuable human beings will go to extraordinary lengths to obtain what people find precious!

The expression "searches every recess" literally reads "probes all"

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

The search for riches will take human beings to remote areas unexplored.

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

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

*sapphires (lapis lazuli?)*

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

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

We have never seen a bird or a lion wearing a miner's hat or a lab coat!

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

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

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

In all these things Job is making reference to human skill and paying tribute to human ingenuity.

Is man completely without any virtues? The answer is no. David McKenna points out the list;

Intellect	“puts an end to darkness”	(v.3)
Persistence	“searches every recess”	(v.3)
Curiosity	‘explores the unknown’	(v.4)
Vision	“that sees better than a falcon”	(v.7)
Courage	“that acts more fiercely than a lion”	(v.8)
Inventiveness	“that makes tools out of flint”	(v.9)
Industry	“that levels mountains; cuts rock”	(vv.9-10)
Discernment	“that perceives the precious”	(v.10)
Creativity	“that provides alternatives”	(v.10)
Insight	“that brings the hidden to light”	(v.11)

“Bildad makes man a grub in the rotting carcass of the earth; Job exalts him as a mind and spirit created in the image of God!” (see McKenna p.197).

Human beings develop mining (vv.1-8); toolmaking (v.9) earthmoving (v.10); conservation (v. 11); we are looking at the roots of technology.

McKenna rightly points out Job's insight provides us a way to think about today's advanced technology;

World-wide communication	Intellect that puts an end to darkness
Cancer Research	Persistence that searches every recess
Oceanography	Curiosity that explores the unknown
Laser Technology	Vision that sees better than the falcon
Space Exploration	Courage greater than a lion
Microchip circuitry	Inventiveness that creates new tools

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Urban Development  
Organ transplants  
Solar Power

Industry that reshapes the environment  
Discernment that perceives the precious  
Creativity that produces new alternatives

We can discover many things; but how do you discover the mind of God and the will of God and the wisdom of God?

Why is that people cannot find wisdom? Job's answer—in part—you cannot find what you do not value! Yet wisdom's value far exceeds gold and silver. There is a wisdom that God is placed in the very fabric of the creation (vv.21-27) and revealed to humanity (v.28).

### **Shopping For Wisdom (vv.12-19)**

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

Thousands of years and thousands of advancements have not changed the question; the genius of man still cannot discover—a particular kind of wisdom. Someone once said; “we know more and more about less and less and pretty soon we will know everything about nothing!

Nuclear energy dramatically illustrates this; in the 1930's scientists predicted the indivisible atom; was exactly that; indivisible. Albert Einstein later quipped that if he had known the consequences of his work he would have preferred to be a plumber. Wisdom doesn't always unfold as quickly as technology.

*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.*

Every single verse (vv.13-19); contains the word “Not” at least once; the emphasis is the absence of wisdom and even the desire for wisdom;

In verse 12 “where is wisdom” receives an emphatic answer; not anywhere in the land of the living or of the dead (v.14; vv.21-22).

Job notes wisdom cannot be brought to market; purchased, weighed, valued, equaled, exchanged or priced (vv.15-19).

Here we see the properties of money or wealth;

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1. Money must be divisible;
2. Money must be portable
3. Durable
4. Recognizable
5. Valuable (scarce in relation to volume and weight).

### **Searching For Wisdom (vv.20-28)**

*20“From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?*

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

*22Destruction and Death say, ‘We have heard a report about it with our ears.’*

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

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

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

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

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

*28And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.’ ”*

Job answers the question; “where is wisdom?”

Job concludes that only God knows the place of true wisdom and knows the place of true understanding. Francis Shaeffer would use the term “true” truth to describe the nature of Biblical truth. No wonder so many Bible teachers contrast the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God. Human beings far exceed animals in knowing about precious metals (v.1); and the source of gems (v.6); but God alone is the ultimate source of wisdom (vv.27-28).

Sound familiar? It should (see Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”. In Proverbs 3:13-18; “Happy is he who has found wisdom, he who has acquired understanding, for wisdom is more profitable than silver, and the gain she brings is better than gold! She is more precious than red coral, and none of your jewels can compare with her. In her right hand is long life, in her left are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and her paths all lead to prosperity. She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and those who hold fast to her are safe” (REB).

McKenna (p.200)

Having exhausted the witness of the natural and the preternatural worlds, Jobs turns to God who understands the “way” of wisdom and knows the “place” of understanding (v.23). But “how” does God know wisdom? Job develops a significant parallel between the science of man, which advances technology, and the science of God, which discovers wisdom. The “scientific

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method” is a discipline of discovery in human knowledge that follows these steps: (1) observing the facts, (2) defining the problem, (3) testing the alternatives, (4) analyzing the evidence, (5) reporting the results, and (6) applying the principles.

Job says that God follows a similar discipline in the discovery of wisdom. He (1) looks to the ends of the earth and sees under all the heavens (v.24); (2) establishes a weight for the wind (v.25); (4) sets a law for the rain and a path for the thunderbolt (v.26); (5) declares the discovery of wisdom that He has seen, prepared and explored (v.27) and then applies his finding to man by saying,

*Behold, the fear of the Lord,  
that is wisdom,  
And to depart from is  
understanding (v.28).*

How did God describe Job in 1:8; “Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”

Job’s friends have accused Job of a conspicuous lack of wisdom; but it is not true. Job was a man of wisdom. The note in my Ryrie Bible reads; “True wisdom is fearing (showing holy respect and reverence for) God and shunning evil” (see p.790; Ryrie Study Bible).

Wiersbe: “It is a loving reverence for God, who He is, what He says, and what He does (Mal. 2:5-6). It is not a fear that paralyzes, but one that energizes. When you fear the Lord, you obey His commandments (Ecc.12:13), walk in His ways (Deut.8:6), and serve Him (Josh.24:14). You are loyal to Him, and give Him wholehearted service (2 Chron. 19:9). Like Job, when you fear the Lord, you depart from evil (Prov.3:7-8). The “fear of the Lord” is the fear that conquers fear (Ps.112); for if you fear God, you need not fear anyone else (Matt. 10:26-31)”(see *Be Patient; p. 108*).

We humans are funny creatures. We imagine a kind of wisdom that exists that is apart from a reverent and respectful attitude toward God (see Wiersbe p.108).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon: “Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. . . There is no fool as great as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.”

There are barriers to true wisdom; “When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom” (Prov.11:2 NKJV).

Why do so many smart people reject God? Pride.

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Paul (1 Cor.1:21 CEV); “God was wise and decided not to let the people of this world use their wisdom to learn about him. Instead, God chose to save only those who believe the foolish message we preach”.

**What is that foolish message Paul speaks of? The gospel.**

### **Conclusion**

What is Job saying? We human beings can't find true wisdom apart from God. We human beings can't buy wisdom apart from God.

Our genius cannot discover wisdom. Our riches (read resources) cannot buy wisdom. God alone is both source and savior. The beginning of wisdom—requires the recognition of the source. We must ask God to be our portion and our supply. When the Lord told Solomon ask from Me whatever you want; Solomon said, “Give me an understanding mind so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great nation of yours?” (I Kings 3:9). We ask God for wisdom (James 1:5). Solomon asked for discernment (right and wrong) to carry out the job—he didn't ask God to do the job!

Wisdom is thinking and living as God designed us to live.

Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge to everyday life.

We become wise when we study and apply God's Word.

The Wisdom God offers in his Word is practical and must be applied to our life.

Most of you have a smart phone. You have access to more information than was contained in the libraries of Alexandria and Ephesus. You have access to the libraries of the world. There is an abundance of information. But wisdom is scarce. Wisdom is more than just knowing the facts or the information; wisdom is the way in which we approach that information; and apply that information.

Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad.

The foundation of knowledge is to fear the Lord—to honor—respect God—to live in awe of His power and obey His Word. Faith in the Lord—should be the controlling principle that informs your understanding of the World, your attitudes and actions. Wisdom is the ability to see life from God's perspective. To see sin from God's perspective. To see human beings from God's perspective. Solomon said, “How wonderful to be wise, to be able to analyze and interpret things. Wisdom lights up a person's face, softening its hardness (Ecc. 8:1).

We become wise as we become more and more like Jesus. Jesus was filled with wisdom. Jesus walked with His father. No wonder James says ‘If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking

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(James 1:5). We can ask for wisdom to guide our choices. It begins with a respect for God. It continues with right living and then results in our ability to know right from wrong.

At the very beginning of our study of Job; we find God honoring and defending Job. Job still does not have the answer to the questions of his suffering; but Job maintains that if there are answers they will be found in the true and living God.

In the New Testament we discover that the Lord Jesus is the source of wisdom and goodness and life.