

March 30

Scriptures: Read Job 27 & 28

Key Verse: "... Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28)

Overview

After Job's response to Bildad (chapter 26), it was Zophar's turn to speak, but since he and the others remained silent, Job continued his discourse, addressing all three of his companions. Bildad's last speech was short and repetitious, and Job had criticized him for not being any help; Zophar likely feared the same criticism, since he also had nothing new to add to the discussion than what he had already said. The extent of his wisdom had been exhausted, and since Job had already proven himself wise and more knowledgeable, Zophar had nothing to teach Job, and Job became the sole teacher.

With the strongest and most solemn of oaths — "As God lives" — Job again firmly declared his innocence and pure conscience, thus showing his friends, who had accused him of some secret sin, that they were absolutely wrong. At the same time, he expressed his belief that God had not been just with him; but this did not weaken his faith. He believed that though he had been veiled from understanding the reason for his sufferings, they were still inflicted upon him by God for His own purposes. Through his sufferings and the tormenting by his friends, Job exclaimed: "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (27:6). Each believer takes an active role maintaining his or her righteousness. Of course, God is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), and it is "not of works lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). But He expects His children to do all they can (using self-discipline, will-power, and determination) to hold true to the Lord and follow His teachings, and the Lord has promised to be our strength.

Job continues his discourse by saying that hypocrites and evil-doers have no hope. He had previously exaggerated his view, asserting that the wicked do not see any retribution; however, that was under the pressure of debate. Now, upon deeper reflection and in a calmer atmosphere, Job modifies his view. Job says that the wicked may prosper for a season, but God will bring punishment, either during life or after death, and their posterity will suffer the consequences of sin (27:14-15). Truly the wicked have no hope, for they live and die without God (27:8-9). Job had an interesting insight into the ways of God concerning "the portion of a wicked man... and the heritage of oppressors" (27:13): "He may pile it up [silver and clothing], but the just will wear it, and the innocent will divide the silver" (27:17). God can use the wealth of the wicked to bless the righteous and bring glory to Himself.

Job continues his instruction about "the hand of God" (27:11) in chapter twenty-eight. Since Job had become the instructor to his friends concerning the mysteries of God, it proved he was more pious, wise, and knowledgeable than they who had condemned him. Job described the various ingenious mining techniques of the day (28:1-11), which is evidence of mankind's God-given dominion over the earth. They knew where to uncover all kinds of hidden treasures, such as gold and precious stones, yet no one has been able to find wisdom; this is only received from God. Job described wisdom as beyond monetary value; it is priceless and immeasurable, and it could

never be purchased (28:13-19; Proverbs 3:13-18; 8:11). A gift cannot be bought, and wisdom is a gift from God — a gift He loves to give liberally. As James penned, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5; cf. Proverbs 2:6; 4:5-9; 8:17).

The way of wisdom is beyond man’s understanding; only “God understands its way, and He knows its place” (28:23), since it comes from Him, and He possesses infinite wisdom. Job explains how God used His wisdom in creating the universe and the laws of nature (28:25-26; cf. Proverbs 3:19-20). Then Job gives a true and profound definition of the wisdom of man: to fear the Lord and depart from evil (28:28; cf. Proverbs 8:12-13; 9:10). These basic requirements are the foundation for all God’s revelations to mankind. To “fear” the Lord is to respect and obey Him, acknowledging that He alone is all-powerful and worthy to be praised. When one believes this and puts it into practice, thus shunning evil, he or she is considered wise in God’s sight.

Prayer

Lord, we ask for wisdom for this new day. Grant that we may be truly respectful and reverent before You, and by Your power in our lives, we do depart from evil. Thank You for helping us to understand.