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Job 23 - 28



Job - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg provides insights on Job 23 - 28. Job discusses how he cannot see God, but God sees him, and that he treasures God's word as necessary food. He also questions the wisdom and counsel of his friends and asserts his righteousness. Gregg explains the meaning behind Job's words and argues that while we cannot fully understand God's ways, placing false value on things without a fear of God is a mistake.

Transcript

Let's take this story up again now. Eliphaz has spoken his last time in chapter 22. Job responds in chapters 23 and 24.

Then Job answered and said, Now, the word judged there is capitalized in the New King James. That doesn't reflect any capitalization in the Hebrew. Obviously, the New King James translators assume that my judge means God.

And that is possibly true, although he might mean that God would vindicate me before those who are judging me. The man like Eliphaz, who's judging me as being wrong. If I could just stand before God, make my case there, do you think God's going to condemn me? I'm sure he would not.

He knows I'm innocent. And he would vindicate me in front of those who are judging me. I'd be delivered from this situation I'm in now, where his most current and most poignant trials right now are that his friends are misjudging him.

Sure, he's still hurting from the death of his children and the loss of his property, but this has been weeks now. At least a week, we know, and could be weeks ago that this happened. He's had time to adjust to that.

He's not reeling in shock from it necessarily, but what he's going through now is this wrong judgment. I mean, people who should have said, Oh, our poor friend Job, he's been such a good man, this is terrible, this is happening to him. They come and say, Well, he must be a very evil man.

And then they tell him that he is. And they start out by being very subtle about it. And then they throw off all restraints, start saying, You know, you afflicted the poor, you oppressed the widows, you know, and they're judging him, they're condemning him.

He said, I just wish I could have, I wish I could plead my case before God instead of you guys, because I tell God the same things I'm telling you. And he'd know I'm right. He knows I'm telling the truth.

You apparently don't. So I wish I could get him to state a verdict about me. He would not contend with me in his great power.

He'd take note of me and, you know, he's fair. He would let the upright reason with him. And he vindicated me or delivered me from my judge.

Look, I go forward, but he's not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him. When he works on the left hand, I cannot behold him. When he turns to the right hand, I cannot see him.

But he knows the way that I take. When he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to his steps.

I have kept his way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of his lips. I've treasured the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Now, what he is saying is still what he's saying before, that although he really can't see God, I mean, if God goes by on the right hand, does something, I can't see him. He's invisible, but I'm not invisible to him. He sees me.

He knows the way that I take, and he is watching me, and he is testing me. And when he is finished testing me, he will find that I was pure gold. I will come forth as gold.

Now, when gold is tested in fire, it often goes into the fire, not pure. It has impurities in it. The testing doesn't only, well, it purifies the gold.

It also it also proves the real gold to be real gold as opposed to other inferior substances that are mixed with the ore. When you pull gold out of a mountainside, it's not just pure gold. It's gold mixed in with other minerals and stuff.

You have to melt it down. The gold is heavier than any other mineral that it's found among. And therefore, when it's all liquefied, the heavy gold stays at the bottom of the liquid broth and the impurities, they in their molten form, rise to the top where they can be just scooped off.

And so gold is purified by fire. But the part of it that it really is gold is proven to be real gold by the fact that it does survive the fire. And it does, you know, prove its worth through the fire.

Fire does not hurt gold. There are some impurities that can be melted off or burned off, but gold will not burn up or melt off. In fact, it doesn't even rust or decay.

And he's saying that I am gold. God is putting me through the fire to test me. And when he's watching, I can't see him, but he can see me.

He's watching carefully what's going on. And when this fiery trial is done, it'll prove that I am what I am. I'll be shown to be what he knows me to be.

In a sense, Job here expresses very, very much close to the truth of what is really going on. And it's the closest he has come to actually getting sort of an insight into what he's going through. Now, he has mentioned earlier that he is tested by God.

And he has wondered why a man needs to be tested every moment. Remember back in chapter 7 and verse 18, when he was first complaining in chapter 7, verse 18, he says, or verse 17, he says, what is man that you should magnify him, that you should set your heart on him, that you should visit him every morning and test him every moment. So Job saw that he was being tested in his trials.

And now he's seeing it as even possibly having a good result. Why? Because he knows his integrity and he knows that God knows his integrity. He's not saying wrong things about God here.

He's saying right things about God. He's all the way through. He said, I don't know why God would do this to me.

And it isn't the reason you guys think it is. But God knows what's right. And God is, you know, after he's tested me, I will be proven.

I will be, you know, I'll be vindicated through this because my foot has held fast to his steps. I've kept his way. I've done what he wants.

I've done what pleases him. I've treasured his words more than my necessary food. This verse as a standalone verse is a great one to indicate how much a godly man hungers for and values the words of God more than my necessary food.

We all eat food that is necessary to our survival. We also eat food that isn't. Many of us eat food that's just snacks or junk food or desserts or things that are not at all necessary.

And he says, you know, I would given the choice between God's words and my necessary food, I would rather be without my necessary food. Well, necessary food is necessary for survival. He's basically saying I'd rather die of starvation, having God's words, then survive and eat my necessary food and not have God's words.

Life without God's word isn't worth living. And if I'm going to die anyway, I'd want to die in possession of the words of God. They're like food to me.

Jeremiah had said something like that when he said, your words were found and I did eat them. And your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart because I'm called by your name, O Lord. As far as what that reference is, I don't have it memorized.

I think it's around Jeremiah, maybe around Jeremiah 15. Maybe I could find it real quickly here. But yeah, Jeremiah 15, 16.

Your words were found and I ate them. Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. David said in Psalm 19 about the words of God, about the laws and the testimonies of God.

He says, more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold and sweeter than honey in the honeycomb. This is how godly men have valued the word of God. They realize that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

And they have valued the life that is sustained by the word of God, their spiritual life, more than they value their earthly life, which is sustained by natural food. And Jesus said that in John chapter 6. He said, do not labor for the food that perishes, but labor for the food that endures unto everlasting life. Now, Job is saying, this has been my attitude.

I have loved God's words. I kept to his path. There's, you know, there's really nothing about God's righteousness that I've had any problem, you know, embracing.

I've delighted in fact. So God knows that and God is just testing me and he knows that I'm pure and I'll come forth as gold after this test is over. Verse 13, but he is unique and who can make him change and whatever his soul desires that he does for he performs what is appointed for me and many such things are with him.

Apparently, he just figures, you know, God appoints certain things for our lives in different times, and these trials are what's appointed for me, and that's what he's doing. Therefore, I'm terrified of his presence when I consider this. I'm afraid of him, for God made my heart weak and the Almighty terrifies me because I was not cut off from the presence of darkness.

And he did not hide deep darkness from my face. When I was righteous, I thought I would be spared from darkness, from calamity. In other words, that God hasn't separated that from me.

God hasn't hidden it from me. He has brought it right to confront me and to be in my life. And I and that scares me because I was pure and I always thought that's the kind of thing that keeps God on your side.

I always thought that's the kind of thing that keeps God from sending disasters to you. But now I don't know what to think, and I'm terrified. And he's already earlier mentioned

that that was also what apparently motivated his friends to to accomplish what they did and to get upset with him because they were terrified.

Or he says, you see evil and you're afraid. You see terror and you're afraid. In chapter six, verse 21, they say that a good man can suffer, and that's something they were hoping wasn't true.

Because that takes the whole realm of our fortunes out of our hands. That means we we can't do a certain number of right things and guarantee that we won't suffer disaster and we would hope that we could, because it's nice to think we can control the world, our world enough that we can spare ourselves from trouble that we can't. Scary chapter 24, since time's not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who know him not see his days as God sees us? He sees our days.

How can we can't see his days? He has this at an unfair advantage. I wish I could see him and present myself to him as he as he was saying on verse in verses eight through 10. You know, I can't see him.

I can't perceive him, but he sees me. He knows my way. He says the same thing there.

Now he says some. And these are the wicked people he's referring to in verse two. Some remove landmarks.

They seize flock violently and feed on them. Now, the removing of landmarks. This isn't like talking about desecrating shrines or something like this.

The landmarks were the border markings on people's land. You know, they didn't have. They didn't have, you know, modern surveying methods or whatever, but they would say a man's land.

OK, it's from that tree over there to. Well, there's no marker. We'll put a rock over here.

This is the border stone over here. And we'll put another stone over on this corner. That's another border.

And they'd mark off their land with landmarks. And if you shoot a straight line between this rock and that one over there, that's my borderline. Well, if a man wanted to steal his neighbor's land or take from his property, he could come out at night and move that landmark over to favor his own neighboring property.

Change the landmark and you've just gotten yourself some free real estate at your neighbor's expense. And that is forbidden in in the Bible. It's forbidden in the law.

And so he's referring to that kind of criminal, someone who actually is a real estate criminal who changes the boundaries of the property when his neighbor is not aware of it and therefore seizes that way illegally some of the property that belongs to his neighbor.

So some remove landmarks, they seize flocks violently and feed on them. They drive away the donkey of the fatherless.

They take the widow's ox as a pledge. They push the needy off the road so that the poor of the land are forced to hide. Indeed, like wild donkeys in the desert.

Now, we have they, they, they all these verses begin with. They was a little confusing because from verse five on first through eight, they are no longer the sum of verse two. They are the poor of verse four.

How do I know that? It's just the only way this can make sense. It was confusing to me when I read it initially because it sounds like, you know, some people do these things in verse two and in verse three. It's day for sports.

They were five. It's they were six, seven, eight. It's they, they, they sound like it's not with the same wicked people the whole time.

But actually, as it turns out, it would appear that once it says they they push the needy off the road so that the poor of the land are forced to hide. Now he's got the needy and the poor and you can talk about the how the poor suffer. He says they go out to their work, seeking diligently for food.

The wilderness yields food for them and for their children. They don't they don't have crops because they're forced off their land by the wicked. So they have to go and be hunter gatherers.

And it's the wilderness that has to yield their food. They gather their fodder in the field and glean in the vineyard of the wicked. Gleaning is what the poor did.

Gleaning was after the after somebody harvested his crops. There were some heads of grain that would fall on the ground. And the word left there for the poor to glean.

And so he's saying there are some people who are not rich and they end up just having to glean in the vineyards of the wicked. They spend the night naked without clothing and have no covering in the cold. They're wet with the showers of the mountains and huddle around the rock for want of shelter.

So we've got, I think, all the they's in verses two, three and four are these wicked people who exploit the poor and the they's in verses five through eight are the poor who have been introduced there in verse four. Now we've got the some again, the same some that were in verse two, the bad guys in verse nine, some snatch the fatherless from the breast and take the pledge from the poor. They cause the poor to go naked without clothing.

And they take away the sheaves from the hungry. Then it would appear they after this

are these poor again, they press out oil within their walls. They tread wine presses yet suffer thirst.

Pressing out oil within their walls, I think, means that they they have to, you know, hide what little they have the olives. They press the oil and they have to go indoors to press the oil, which would not be where you normally do it. But they have to hide what they have from those that steal their stuff from them, the wicked.

And so what little oil they press out of their olives, they do it behind closed doors, sort of when no one knows they can do it. And they tread the wine press, yet they suffer thirst. The dying groan in the city and the souls of the wounded cry out.

Yet God does not charge them with wrong. And that is that God does not charge the ones with wrong who oppress them. Apparently, it's what he's saying.

So he's saying there are people who are oppressed and there are people who are their oppressors. And it would appear that God does not charge the oppressors with wrong. Now, he's not saying that he never will.

He's not saying there is no judgment, although I don't know if Joe knows there will be a judgment or not. All he knows is that in terms of the fortunes of the wicked and the righteous in this life, God doesn't seem to levy a penalty against the wicked. And that's what he doesn't understand.

There are those who rebel against the light, he says. They do not know its ways nor abide in its path. The murder arises with the light.

He kills the poor and needy. And in the night he is like a thief. The eye of the adulterer awaits for the twilight, saying, No, I will see me.

And he disguises his face in the dark. They break into houses which they marked for themselves in the daytime. They do not know the light for the morning is the same to them as the shadow of death.

If someone recognizes them, they're in terrors of the shadow of death. What he's saying is there are some people who have to do everything they do at night because they're wicked. They need to do things under cover of darkness.

They don't like the light. They don't want the day to dawn because they might be recognized. And so they do all their dirty deeds at night.

It says in verse 18, they should be swift. On the face of the waters, their portion should be cursed in the earth. Now, the should be is in italics.

The Hebrew of this chapter, I've heard that from the commentators. This particular chapter is just fraught with translators difficulties. And many one of the difficulties is that

verses 18 through 25 are thought to not express what Job himself would say, because the way it reads without the should be.

It sounds like he's saying they are swift on the face of the earth. They are cursed on the earth. They do have trials.

But of course, Job's position is the opposite of that. So some feel like this is one of the speeches of his friends. Maybe the missing speech of Zophar is something they got stuck in here just in the handling of the manuscripts over the years.

I however, this new King James seems to bring the idea out by putting in should be. It's not that they are swift on the face of the waters as the water should carry them away. The waters of punishment should carry these people away swiftly.

Their portion should be cursed in the earth so that one would turn into the way of their vineyards as drought and heat consume the snow water. So should the grave of those who have sinned. Notice how many words are actually in the Hebrew of that last line.

It just says the grave have sinned. That's what's in the Hebrew. So the translator has to figure out, OK, what's that mean? The grave of those who have sinned should should consume them or whatever.

This is difficult because there's you see how many italicized words are here. If you read the passage without them, there's a lot of on uncomplete sentences that are difficult to know exactly how they would be translated. The womb should forget him.

The worm should feed sweetly on him. He should be remembered no more. The wickedness should be broken like a tree for he prays on the barren who do not bear.

Maybe the childless woman who's already considered to be unfortunate for being barren. He prays on and takes advantage of them, probably financially and does no good for the widow. But God draws the mighty away with his power.

He rises up and no man is sure of life. He gives them security and they rely on it. Yet his eyes are on their ways.

They are exalted for a little while. Then they are gone. They are brought low and are taken out of the way like all others.

They they dry out like the heads of grain. Now this sounds like something that Zophar said about how short lived the wicked are. And again, that's one reason why some scholars think, well, maybe maybe the fact that we don't have a final speech from Zophar is an omission.

Maybe the manuscripts somehow got, you know, kind of messed up over the centuries and maybe some words dropped out like Zophar said or something like that. A lot of

commentators wrestle with these with these kinds of things, because it looks like the thing that Zophar was saying earlier. And it doesn't look, they say, like something Job would say.

But the way it's come down to this is how it is. And we have to ask, well, could Job have said this? And he could. He could be granting, you know, that it is true that many times that the wicked do come to a bad end.

Job knew that. He didn't like the implications of what Zophar and Eliphaz said. When they pointed this out, because they're implying that he had come to a bad end because he was wicked.

But once you disattach it from his own personal case, he can observe it. Sure, everyone can see that from time to time, the wicked fall under the judgment of God. So, I mean, he could be acknowledging that without any problem.

And he says in verse 25, if it is not so, who will prove me a liar and make my speech worth nothing? Well, the last person who tries to prove him a liar is Bildad, but he doesn't really try very hard to prove Job a liar. He just kind of fizzles out. This is, you know, this is what, this speech of Zophar is almost worthless.

I think the fact that it's here is given just to say the guy ran out of steam. The guy didn't have any more arguments. He couldn't, he'd repeated himself twice before.

He wasn't going to repeat himself again. He's bowing out. This is his parting shot.

He doesn't have anything very interesting or original to say. In fact, it sounds like he's just quoting a series of platitudes that were probably sayings of the wise already. And he says Bildad the Shuhite answered and said in chapter 25, dominion and fear belong to him.

He makes peace in his high places. Is there any number to his armies? Upon whom does his light not shine, rise? How then can man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman? If even the moon does not shine and the stars not pure in his sight, how much less man who is a maggot and a son of man who is a worm? Now, you see, Bildad has not here really even stuck to his own guns, although he is not deliberately backing down. He's just doing what, like Eliphaz, inconsistent.

Eliphaz was inconsistent because in his first speech he said, oh, Job, you helped the poor and you helped the widow. And then his last speech said, you didn't help the poor and you didn't help the widow. These guys are not even paying attention to whether they're being consistent.

They're just raving in many cases. But here his basic point is nobody is righteous. Every man is a worm.

How can anyone be righteous before God? Well, then what was this talk of what God does for a righteous man? Early in Bildad's speeches, like in chapter eight, verse six, Bildad was speaking and he said, if you were pure and upright, surely now he would awake for you and prosper your rightful habitation. And in the same chapter, verse 20, he says, behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will he uphold evil doers. So, I mean, Bildad, like the others, have been implying there are good men and you're not one of them.

If you were one of them, then God would uphold you. God would protect you. God would prevent these calamities from happening to you.

But you must be a bad man. But now he's going the other way. There's no one's good.

Let's see if that's true. Then he's thrown his whole case away. Because if every man is a maggot and if every man is a worm and no one is righteous before God, then that would include Bildad and his friends.

They weren't righteous either. He and Job, they're all in the same boat. They're all equally not righteous.

They're all just a bunch of worms. But if that's true, then what has become of this case? What he's been arguing earlier is that we have not suffered what you've suffered because we are not sinners like you are. You're bad and we're better.

So you've suffered and we have not. And now he's basically given up that line and said everybody's bad. But if that's true, then why doesn't everyone suffer like Job does? Well, Bildad is just he's on his way out here and we're not going to hear from him again.

And he doesn't really have anything profound to add to the argument, except to say things that he may not even realize contradict his own earlier statements. Now, we have from here on chapter 26 through 31, the longest series of unbroken speeches by any one speaker in the book of Job. We will have speeches from Elihu and from God, but they will not go on quite as long as these speeches of Job.

These are treated as if they are like separate discourses at times, because chapter 26, one says, but Job answered and said, verse 20, chapter 27 says, moreover, Job continued his discourse and said, then chapter 29, Job further continued his discourse and said, and these interruptions that say Job continued his discourse. They don't always come up previously whenever his discourse goes for two or three chapters, so it may be that he continued at a later point. He spoke some of this on one occasion and later he continued it and it's punctuated.

His breaks are punctuated this way. In any case, not all of these chapters say exactly the same thing. Chapters 26 and 27 could easily be seen as the end of his dialogue with these three men.

And then, you know, it's possible that there was an audience here and that some of the things that Job says are for the sake of the audience. Elihu was apparently there as an audience and we didn't know it. The only reason we know is there is he finally spoke up.

Maybe there are others sitting around listening who didn't speak up to. Job was, after all, a famous man. It's possible that there had been people besides these three men who had gathered around just to kind of hear what he was going to say.

Or maybe, especially when these three men who may have been famous for their philosophical prowess, maybe when they showed up that other townspeople came along and said, I wonder what these three men are going to say. What are these guys going to say? In any case, we know Elihu was there and we didn't know before. There may have been a group of people around there.

And some of the things Job says sound like they may be just his way of addressing nobody in particular. Not Eliphaz and Zophar and Bildad. Maybe just whoever's listening.

Maybe the crowd that's there. Because he seems to finish his address to his three friends in chapters 26 and 27. And then there's kind of a just a poem about wisdom in chapter 28 that doesn't seem to.

It doesn't seem to have anything to do with what went on before or after. It's like a standalone poem. Some commentators think it was even written by the same author on another occasion and it got stuck in here.

Or maybe it's put in here in order to be a break from the speeches with these three guys to move into the speeches of Elihu and God. It's hard to say. But in chapters 29 through 31, Job is going to reminisce about how good things were before his trial.

And then he's going to talk about how bad his trials are. And then he's going to talk about how innocent he is. And that's going to be the end of his speeches in the book.

But here in chapter 26 and 27, which we should at least cover, if not more, this probably is his final shot at these three guys. But Job answered and said, How have you helped him who is without power? How have you saved the arm that has no strength? How have you counseled one who has no wisdom? How have you declared sound advice to many? To whom have you uttered words? And whose spirit came from you? So this is his summary. You guys are clearly done.

Eliphaz has spoken three times. Bildad has spoken three times, but really only two and a half times. Zophar's rested his case.

It's as if the debate is over and Job says, Now let me summarize here. What really have you guys accomplished? What kind of help have you given me? What kind of counsel have you given me that I couldn't have said the same thing myself? Whose spirit really

came from you? Now, they may have thought it was the spirit of the Lord speaking through them, though they never specifically claimed that. Although Eliphaz in his first speech said that he had heard from spirit.

But that might have been a demonic spirit. It's hard to say. They certainly didn't speak with the right spirit.

We know that. Remember when, I think it's in Luke chapter 9, Jesus and his disciples were passing through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. And the people of Samaria would not lodge them.

They were inhospitable to them. And it says that James and John came to Jesus and said, Shall we call fire out of heaven on them like Elijah did? And Jesus said, You do not know what manner of spirit you are. So the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

But it's interesting. He said, You're speaking, but you don't know what spirit you're speaking of. It may not mean he was saying there was a demonic spirit, but they certainly weren't speaking with the spirit of Christ.

I guess maybe it's not that chapter. Maybe it's chapter 10. I don't know where it is now, but I'm not going to go look for it because it'll take too long.

But anyway, that statement, You do not know what manner of spirit you're of, I think is really kind of an important statement. It is chapter 9. Luke chapter 9, verses 54 and following. When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them just as Elijah did? What a funny thing for them to ask Jesus.

Like, couldn't Jesus do that for himself if he wanted to? Lord, do you want to do this for him? Want us to call fire out of heaven? Well, had they ever done anything like that? Did they think they had the power to do that? Apparently, if he told them to, they figured they could. They're just asking for permission. And he turned and rebuked them and said, You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

Now, that is missing from the Alexandrian text, but I think it's genuine. And he says, For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. So Job, I think, is saying to his friends, You don't know what manner of spirit you're of.

Your spirit is not right. Your words, some of them have been orthodox and true, but your spirit is not right. And perhaps that's a lesson that Christians need to be aware of, is that we might have the right doctrine, we might have the right beliefs, we might be communicating things that are actually true.

But if they're in the wrong spirit, then they're going to do damage, not help. Now, Job 26,

5, The dead tremble, those under the waters and those inhabiting them. Sheol is naked before God and destruction has no covering.

He stretches out the north over the empty space. He hangs the earth on nothing. This statement is sometimes quoted as an indication that, you know, the Bible is inspired because Job knew something that we know to be true, but which was not known by the people of his day.

In those ancient times, the general belief was that the earth was not hanged on nothing. The earth actually was resting on the backs of three elephants and that those three elephants were standing on a giant tortoise. That was the pagan view of things at the time.

And Job said, God hanged the earth on nothing, which obviously reflects a different view than that of the of the times and one very much agreeable with our own. We would say he hanged the earth on nothing, too. And we could prove it because we've been out to space.

We've seen there's no there's no coat rack that he's hanging it from or there's no turtle either or elephants. And yet, I mean, Job was right, certainly. But I don't know that we're supposed to believe that everything Job said in his speeches was inspired any more than everything his friends said was inspired.

He may have said this under inspiration. And it may be that God is now inspiring him to speak in rebuke to his friends now that these conversations have come to an end. And it may be that God is revealing something to him here.

It's an interesting fact that it does agree with modern views rather than his own time. Speaking of God, it says he binds up the water in his thick clouds. Yet the clouds are not broken under it.

This is a marvelous thing when you think about because the clouds are full of water. Water is heavy. You know, imagine if you take all the water that comes in a rainstorm and put in a big container and try to weigh how much that water weighs.

I mean, just just lift a five gallon bucket of water and you know, water's heavy. There's all that weight of water up there in the clouds. And he says, but they don't break.

They don't break under that weight. Well, they do sometimes. They did it the flood and they do in measure when when it rains.

But the point is, there's clouds when it's not raining and there's water up there. And he's just marveling at that phenomenon. He covers the face of his throne and spreads his cloud over it.

He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters. Now, see, that could be a reference to just as you turn around and look at, you know, from a tall mountain or something. You can see the horizon is all around you.

So you might be deducing there's a round circle around the edge of the earth, around around the borders of the oceans. This is not a scientific statement. And therefore, one has to wonder whether verse seven is intended to be either.

The pillars of the heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. He stirs up the sea with his power and by his understanding, he breaks up the storm. By his spirit, he adorned the heavens.

His hand pierced the fleeing serpent. Indeed, these are the mere edges of his ways. And how small a whisper we hear of him, but the thunder of his power who can understand.

Now, of course, he's saying again, really, what is his thesis? We don't understand what God does. And I think what he's saying also here to his friends is you think you do. You think you understand what God has done.

God has brought calamity on me. You think you know the ways of God so much that you think it is always because of this, that he does that. He says, we don't understand the very edges of his ways.

We don't understand how the clouds can hold water up. We don't understand how he established the seas and so forth. Now, if we don't understand that, those are just the edges of his ways.

The really mysterious stuff we can't even hope to understand. And he says, how small a whisper we hear of him, but the thunder of his power who can understand the thunder of his power probably is a reference to the things that the calamities have come on Joe. You know, most of the time God is just whispering, but he thunders sometimes.

And wasn't it C.S. Lewis? Someone know that famous quote from C.S. Lewis? There's no Lewis scholars here. There's a really often quoted quote from C.S. Lewis that I can't quote exactly. Something like something like he whispers and.

He whispers in this and he speaks of that, but he thunders in our pains or something like that. I don't anyway, basically what Lewis indicates that God speaks in many ways, but he speaks most loudly in our trials and that and this was almost almost verbally the same. Job says that not chapter 27.

Moreover, Job continued his discourse and said, as God lives, who has taken away my justice and the almighty, who has made my soul bitter as long as my breath is in me and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit, far be it from me that I should say you are right. That is his friends. Till I die, I will

not put away my integrity from me.

My righteousness, I hold fast and I will not let it go. My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live. Now, it might sound like he's saying I'm going to be righteous.

I'm not going to compromise my life as long as I live. I'll never let go my righteousness. I'll never put away my integrity, although although that may be true.

It's not the point he's making. He said, I'm going to protest until I die that I have integrity. I'm going to protest that I'm righteous.

I'm not going to give up my claim, my plea that I am not guilty. I'm going to hold that firmly until I die. May my enemy be like the wicked and he who rises up against me like the unrighteous.

Now, this is a way of saying. I'm not the wicked. May it be to my those who are my enemies, may it be to them like the wicked, because I don't I'm not wicked and I don't deserve to have it like me.

You know, the things the wicked have happened to me. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much if God takes away his life? Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? Will he delight himself in the almighty? Will he always call on God? I will teach you about the hand of God. What is the almighty? What is with the almighty? I will not conceal.

Surely all of you have seen it. Why then do you behave with complete nonsense? This is the portion of a wicked man with God and the heritage of oppressors received from the almighty. Now, by the way, he occupies the rest of the chapter talking about the bad things that happen to the wicked, which again sounds like something one of his friends would say instead of him.

And and that's why some scholars think that this section of Job maybe got jostled up in the handling and the passing down, maybe some pages got put in the wrong places and so forth. And that, you know, maybe some of the speeches that really were his friend's speeches, which seemed to be missing, like Zophar's speech or maybe more of Bildad's last speech. Maybe they got moved around and this is the kind of thing we expect them to say, not Job.

On the other hand, we don't know that it's changed. Maybe the Job did say these things. There's no reason why Job in parting could not agree with something they said.

After all, he didn't disagree with their theology, just disagreed with their application. And so having said, I am innocent, he could, you know, he's always said, I don't agree with you guys. God forbid that I should agree that say you're right.

In verse five, it says, far be it from me that I should say that you're right. You're not right. However, there you are right on one thing, and that is that things often do go badly for the wicked.

And ultimately they will, because God is going to do justice in the end. He says in this chapter that God has taken away his justice. And we might think that saying that God is unjust, but he's not talking about God's innate injustice.

He's saying my circumstances have not been just. I have not received what I deserve. He is not saying God is unjust.

He just has he's saying as things stand now, justice is not being done. My just cause has been taken from me. But see, God is not unjust unless he doesn't eventually correct things for God to allow there to be suffering.

That is unjustified, doesn't tell us that God is unjust unless God never redresses it. And so he is saying only something about his circumstance. He's not saying something about God.

He's saying that what God has done to me up to this point is he's removed justice. I have not I'm not receiving justice. But he's not saying God won't change things.

And the fact is, this last speech almost he sounds like he's affirming that at least in terms of the wicked, God is going to do the just thing ultimately to them. Although he has complained earlier that the wicked do sometimes get away with it for life. But he's going to affirm nonetheless that oppressors and the wicked are really courting disaster.

He says, this is the portion of a wicked man with God and the heritage of oppressors received from the Almighty. If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword. That is, God may give the wicked a lot of children, but they're going to be wiped out and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

Those who survive him shall be buried in death and their widows shall not weep. Though he heaps up silver like dust and piles up clothing like clay, he may pile it up, but the just will wear it. The innocent will divide the silver.

That is, when he dies, it'll be inherited among more better people than himself. He builds his house like a moth, which means very fragile, like a booth which a watchman makes. The rich man will lie down and not be gathered up.

He opens his eyes and he is no more. Terror is overtake him like a flood. A tempest steals him away in the night.

The east wind carries him away and he is gone. It sweeps him out of his place. It hurls against him and does not spare.

He flees desperately from its power. Men shall clap their hands at him and shall hiss him out of his place. Now, the next chapter doesn't continue along the same vein.

So this seems to be the end of his answer to his friends. And he ends up saying things that we expect them to say, because they've said those very same kinds of things. So either either there's been some mis misorganization or disorganization of the material, or else Job is closing by saying there are things I agree with you about.

God ultimately does bring disaster on the wicked, at least most of the time. Wisdom, remember, is not wisdom. Literature is not there to tell you what will always happen.

It's there to tell you what will normally happen, what can be expected to happen, what kind of results you can expect by following a certain course. And it is true that if a man follows a wicked course, he's courting disaster. Now, some individual cases always rich men may not experience disaster.

And Job is pointing out, we know rich people who lived happily, died peaceably, were honored after their death. You know, he's made a case that that happens sometimes. But the wisdom of the wisdom literature would be.

But that's not something you better count on. If you think about being wicked, don't count on being one of those ones that dies that way and lives that way. This is much more what you can look forward to in most cases.

There are exceptions. And Job himself is an exception to the opposite, because it is generally true that God blesses the righteous and spares him. As much of the wisdom literature says, the Proverbs, many of the Psalms and much of Job affirms that God blesses the righteous.

But Job is an exception in this particular experience he's going through. So it is legitimate to affirm the generality. But what his friends were unable to do and what Job has done is that there are clearly exceptions to the generality.

God is not bound to some framework of behavior that that we can observe and that we can hold him to. Except, of course. God is bound by his own character.

The thing is, his own character only requires that he be just. It does not mean that everything that happens in in the world has to be just. Because if God, in fact, intends to right all wrongs and bring just retribution and reward to as it as it is deserved in another life.

Well, then whatever happens in the interim can't can't tell us very much about justice of God. We can see that things happen that are not just, but that doesn't mean God's not just because he may turn it all around. And if he turns it all around, then no one's going to say that he had done the wrong thing.

And of course, in Job's case, although Job did not know for sure what was going to happen and earlier, he had had a lot of despair. But later he had quite a bit of confidence that he's going to stand before God vindicated at some point in the future. That's what he had said in chapter 19, verse 25 to 27.

So also, he believes the wicked, even though in many cases they seem to prosper, they will fall. They will succumb to God's judgment ultimately because God is just in that respect. I think Job does speak rightly of God.

We only have a few minutes, but I would like to take chapter 28 also, just because I'd like we have a lot of chapters ahead of us. And it's nice to put another one behind us. And chapter 28 is a standalone chapter.

It's refreshing in that it doesn't really go over any of the same ground again. It doesn't even address the same subject. It's just kind of like a wisdom poem, such as you find in Proverbs chapter 8. Proverbs chapter 8 is a wisdom poem about wisdom and how important wisdom is and valuable wisdom is and all of that.

This poem is about how men do not necessarily know where to find wisdom. But it does conclude that wisdom is found in righteousness, in the fear of the Lord. It starts with 11 verses talking about men searching for gold and for silver.

It's got a lot of allusions to the mining practices of that day, how people would mine gold and silver out of the ground. And the point in the first 11 verses is this. Men have learned how to find gold.

It's not easy to find. You have to dig around for it. But men have figured out how to find gold.

But the rest of the chapter is saying, but they haven't learned how to find wisdom, which is worth more than gold. And if we wanted to find gold, we'd go to a gold mine. But if we want to find wisdom, where do we go for that? That's basically the message of this particular chapter, as you'll see.

Surely there is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. Iron is taken from the earth and copper is smelted from ore. Man puts an end to darkness and searches every recess for ore in the darkness and in the shadow of death that is underground.

He goes underground and he takes the lamp down there, puts an end to the darkness down there, brings light down there so he can search underground for gold and silver ore and other minerals. He breaks open a shaft away from people in places forgotten by feet. They hang far away from men.

They swing to and fro. I'm not sure what swings to and fro. It may be the the lamps that they take down underground with them.

As for the earth, from it comes bread, but underneath it is turned up as by fire. Its stones are the source of sapphires and it contains gold dust. That path, no bird knows, nor has the falcons.

I've seen it. Why? Because it's underground, the birds don't go underground. Birds can see all kinds of things, he's assuming they can see because they have a vantage point up in the sky.

They can see a lot more than we can, but they can't see where the gold is. They can't see where the ore is because it's underground where they don't go. The proud lions have not trodden it, nor have the fierce lion passed over it.

He puts his hand out on the flint. He overturns the mountains, apparently meaning God does, at the roots. He cuts out channels or maybe man does in the rocks and his eyes see every precious thing.

He dams up the streams from trickling. What is hidden, he brings forth to light. Actually, this is referring not to, of course, God's actions, but to the miners actions.

But where can wisdom be found and where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living. The experience of Job and his three friends seem to indicate that they were seeking wisdom about the situation. And these are some of the wisest men of the East trying to sort it out.

And they didn't find it. They didn't find an answer. Wisdom is not found in the land of the living.

The deep says it's not in me and the sea says it's not with me. You know, if you go looking in the ocean for it, you're not going to see it there. The sea, they don't look here.

It's not here. It cannot be purchased for gold, nor can silver be weighed for its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of offer in precious onyx or sapphire.

Neither gold nor crystal can equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewelry or find a fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or quartz, for the price of wisdom is above rubies. Solomon said in Proverbs 31 that the price of a virtuous wife was above rubies.

Same expression. It means they're more rare. You see, the reason rubies are valuable is not because they've got value in the laser technology in modern times.

They didn't have technology that needed rubies in the old days. They they're rare. They're rare.

That's why they're valuable. That's why gold is valued. Precious metals and precious stones are precious because they are hard to find.

They're rare. And so to say that, let's say, a valuable wife, a virtuous wife, is her price is above rubies because it's rare. That's what that's what it says in Proverbs 31 10.

Who can find a virtuous wife? Her price is above rubies. It's hard to find. And so is wisdom.

For the same reason, it's hard to find wisdom. It's harder to find wisdom than it is to find rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold.

For where, then, does wisdom come from? Where does it come and where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. Destruction and death say we have heard a report about it with our ears. But of course, this means that they don't have it.

God understands its way and he knows its place. And this is his answer. Man knows where to look for silver and gold, but only God knows where to find wisdom.

He knows where it is, for he looks to the ends of the earth and sees under the whole of heaven to establish a way for the wind and meet out the waters by measure. When he made a law for the rain, a path for the thunderbolt, then he saw wisdom and declared it. He prepared it.

Indeed, he searched it out. And to man, he said, behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding.

So in other words, wisdom is morality. Wisdom is piety. Wisdom is fearing God and departing from evil.

Wisdom is not philosophical speculating. Wisdom is seen in the way that you live and what you pursue. If you pursue God, that's wise.

If you don't, you're foolish. You know that in Proverbs chapter one and verse seven says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But Proverbs also says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom over in Proverbs, I think it's chapter nine.

If I recall. Proverbs nine and verse 10 says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy one is understanding. It's very similar to what Job said, a little different, because Proverbs says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

That is, you need to fear God before you can really start to learn anything of value. If you don't fear God, you haven't learned anything that matters. A man who lives his life without the fear of God, whatever he values, he's he's placing a false value on it because he doesn't know what the true value of things is, a relationship with God.

That's value. Whereas Job just says the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. It's not just the

beginning of wisdom, it is wisdom.

And departing from evil is understanding. So this poem about wisdom essentially places its value above that of gold and silver and says it's one reason it's valued more is because it's harder to find. People know where to find silver and gold.

They don't know where to find wisdom. But God has spoken in the end and said, well, you want to have wisdom, just fear God. And that's wisdom.

That will be your wisdom. And so we will stop there. And it is actually something of a turning point in the book of Job.

We'll come back next time.