

Dr. John Walton, Job, Session 17 – Podcast

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All right, everyone, get ready for a deep dive today into, well, not the whole thing, but a really fascinating part of the Book of Job. Oh, yeah, definitely a fascinating part. We're going to be focusing on just one chapter, Chapter 28, that kind of throws a curveball into this whole story.

You're absolutely right. It's a chapter that's often overlooked. You know, when people think about the Book of Job, you usually remember Job for his suffering, all those debates with his friends, you know, back and forth.

Yeah, yeah. But Chapter 28, it's like an intermission that suddenly changes the entire tune of the conversation. It's like, yeah, exactly.

It's like we're taken from this really intense courtroom drama, right, into this like quiet moment of reflection, almost philosophical. And you know, Job, he's just done arguing his case. He's proven his righteousness, but he's still suffering.

And then, boom, we get this incredible poem about wisdom. So what's going on here? Well, it's not just a pretty poem. You know, it's crucial for understanding everything that comes after.

This chapter really shifts our whole perspective. You see, Job and his friends, they were so fixated on this idea of justice, right? As good deeds get rewarded, bad deeds get punished, that kind of thing. But Chapter 28 introduces something much, much bigger: wisdom as the actual foundation of creation itself.

Okay, so how does that even work? Yeah. I mean, the chapter starts by talking about mining, like, you know, digging deep down to uncover these hidden treasures. Exactly.

And that's the whole point. Okay. We think of miners searching for gold, for silver, precious gems, right? Yeah.

But when it comes to wisdom, you can't just dig it up. Okay. The text, it really drives this point home with a series of rhetorical questions.

You know, where can wisdom be found? Can you buy it? Can you trade for it? And the answer is a resounding no. True wisdom, it's a gift from God, something far, far beyond our human grasp. So if wisdom is this divine gift, then this foundational principle- what does that say about our human attempts, you know, to make sense of the world? I mean, we're always trying to figure things out, apply logic, seek justice.

Right. And that's exactly where Job and his friends got stuck. They were operating on this limited understanding of a cosmic balance sheet, like good deeds equal good fortune, bad deeds equal suffering.

Yeah. But verse 27 completely upends that. Okay.

It says, then he, God, looked at wisdom and appraised it. He confirmed it and tested it. Wow.

So God builds creation based on wisdom, not on some kind of rigid system of justice that we can fully comprehend. Whoa. That's, that's pretty radical.

It is. So you're saying that the universe isn't built on a strict reward-punishment system. That's right.

I mean, what are the implications of that? Does that mean like everything is random or chaotic? Not at all. Okay. It simply suggests that there's a much, much bigger picture at play.

Okay. A divine wisdom, you know, that transcends our limited understanding. It's like we're looking at a tapestry, but only seeing the back, you know, with all the messy knots and the loose threads.

But God, he sees the complete picture, the intricate design, the beauty that emerges from what might seem to us chaotic. Okay. That makes sense.

But I mean, it's still a lot to wrap your head around. So how does that, you know, how does that help us deal with suffering or make sense of the injustices we see in the world? It's definitely challenging, but maybe instead of demanding answers, you know, or trying to fit everything into a neat box of justice, maybe we can learn to kind of lean into that mystery, to trust that even when things seem unfair or inexplicable, there's a deeper wisdom at work. I see what you mean.

Yeah. It's like accepting that we don't have all the answers, that God's wisdom is bigger than our own. Yeah.

But, but is that just blind faith then? How do we, how do we bridge that gap between like our limited understanding and this idea of divine wisdom? Well, that's where another really key concept comes in, you know, the fear of the Lord or what the text calls fearing Adonai. Okay. Fearing Adonai.

Yeah. There's that name for God again, Adonai. Yeah.

Why is it so significant? You're right to pick up on that. It's only used here in the entire book of Job. Wow.

And it's a deliberate choice. Okay. Adonai emphasizes God's authority and his sovereignty, you know, which are absolutely essential for understanding what this fear really means.

It's about recognizing that God's ways are higher than ours. His thoughts are deeper than ours, and his wisdom is far, far beyond anything we could ever conceive. So it's less about trembling in fear and more about humbling ourselves, like before a wisdom that we can't fully comprehend.

Precisely. Okay. It's about surrendering to the mystery, acknowledging that we don't have all the answers and choosing to trust God even in the face of the unknown.

This idea of surrendering control, I mean, that's pretty daunting, especially, you know, when we're dealing with pain or struggling to make sense of our own lives. Yeah. So, so how does fearing Adonai actually help us in those moments? Well, it's definitely not easy.

Yeah. But it offers a different way of approaching challenges, you know, instead of demanding explanations or trying to force our own understanding onto the situation. We can choose to trust that God is at work.

Okay. Even when we can't see the whole picture. So we're not supposed to just like sit back passively and just accept whatever happens? Right.

We're still supposed to like seek understanding. Absolutely. To question, to grapple with these difficult concepts.

Yeah. The Book of Job isn't about blind obedience, you know, or suppressing our doubts and questions. It's about engaging with these profound mysteries, wrestling with them.

Yeah. And ultimately choosing to trust in God's wisdom even when we don't fully understand. This is so much more than just like God is wise, isn't it? It is.

It's about a fundamental shift in perspective, a way of approaching life with humility and trust even when things are tough. Yes. But, but Chapter 28 isn't just about, you know, abstract philosophical ideas.

It's connected to how we live, how we make choices, how we treat others. Exactly. And that's where the chapter's link between fearing God and shunning evil comes in.

It suggests that this kind of wisdom isn't just about intellectual understanding. It's deeply ethical. It's about aligning our actions with God's goodness even when it's hard or inconvenient.

That's a great point. So fearing Adonai, it's not just about some internal feeling or, you know, abstract belief. Right.

It's about living it out in our everyday lives, making choices that reflect God's wisdom and goodness. You got it. Okay.

So we've got this foundation of wisdom, this call to fear Adonai. But why is Chapter 28 so crucial to the rest of the book? You know, where does this leave Job in his struggle with suffering? That's a great question. And, you know, I'm eager to explore that further.

This chapter is a turning point. A shift from the debate about reward and punishment to a deeper exploration of God's wisdom and how it relates to suffering. This is already so much to digest.

I know. But I'm hooked. So what happens next? Well, let's take a short break and then we'll dive into how these ideas of wisdom and fearing Adonai actually play out in the rest of Job's story.

Sounds good to me. All right. All right.

So we just left off talking about how Chapter 28 totally shifts the conversation in Job. Yeah. It's not about, you know, figuring out why he's suffering anymore.

Right. It's about this idea of God's wisdom being the foundation of everything. But where does that leave Job? I mean, he's still hurting, still searching for answers.

Exactly. And that's what makes this chapter so powerful. You know? Okay.

It's not just an abstract philosophical detour. It's setting the stage for Job's ultimate encounter with God. Okay.

Remember, he spent all this time arguing for his innocence. Yeah. Trying to fit his suffering into this framework of justice.

Right. But Chapter 28, it cracks that framework wide open. So it's like Chapter 28 is preparing Job and us for a different kind of answer.

Exactly. Not a neat explanation or a cosmic balancing of the scales, but something deeper, something that might be beyond our full understanding. Right.

It's like Job's being told, okay, you've made your case, you've proven your point. Yeah. Now let's talk about something bigger than human justice.

And that something bigger is God's wisdom, which operates on a level we can't always grasp. But that's, I mean, that's got to be frustrating, right? Oh, absolutely. To be told to trust in something you can't even comprehend, especially when you're in the middle of so much pain.

Absolutely. And I think that's where this idea of fearing Adonai comes in. It's not about blind faith or ignoring the very real struggle that Job is going through.

It's about a choice, a surrender to something bigger than ourselves, even when it's hard, even when it doesn't make sense. Okay. I'm trying to wrap my head around this.

Yeah. So you're saying that facing suffering, especially when it seems so unfair, requires this shift from demanding answers to surrendering to God's wisdom. I mean, that's a huge ask.

It is a huge ask, no doubt. And it's not like flipping a switch. It's a process, a journey of wrestling with doubt, questioning, and ultimately choosing to trust.

Okay. Think about it. How often do we try to force-fit our experiences into our limited understanding of how things should be? We demand explanations.

We get angry when life feels unfair. Oh, all the time, especially when things are going wrong. We're looking for someone to blame, something to blame.

Exactly. And you're suggesting that maybe we need to let go of that need for control, that desperate search for explanations. Yeah.

I mean, it's hard to accept that sometimes there aren't easy answers. Exactly. And that's where the wisdom of Job 28 can really speak to us.

It's in those moments of darkness, confusion, and pain that we have a choice. We can stay stuck in that cycle of anger and demand for explanations, or we can choose to surrender, to trust that even in the midst of this, God is present, he's working, and he loves us. So it's not about pretending everything is okay or ignoring the pain.

It's about choosing to trust God, even when it feels like everything is falling apart. You got it. Wow.

It's about saying, okay, God, I don't understand, but I trust you. And that's a powerful statement of faith, a statement that can carry us through even the darkest of times, because even when we don't understand, we can hold onto the truth that God is wise, he's good, and he loves us. That's a powerful reminder, especially in a world that often feels chaotic and unpredictable.

Absolutely. But this idea of surrender, of fearing Adonai, it feels so countercultural. It is.

We're constantly bombarded with messages about taking control, demanding our rights, fighting for what we deserve. You're absolutely right. And that's what makes the message of Job 28 so radical and so relevant.

It's a call to embrace a different way of being, a way of living that prioritizes trust, humility, and surrender to a wisdom that's bigger than our own limited understanding. So it's not about becoming passive or accepting injustice. It's about choosing to trust God, even when we don't have all the answers.

But how does that translate to action? I mean, if we're not supposed to just sit back and do nothing, how do we live out this kind of wisdom in our everyday lives? That's a great question. And it brings us back to the link between fearing Adonai and shunning evil. Remember, the chapter emphasizes true wisdom.

It isn't just about intellectual understanding. It's about aligning our actions with God's goodness. So it's about living out that trust, that surrender in intangible ways.

Exactly. It's about making choices that reflect God's wisdom, even when it's hard, even when it goes against our natural inclinations. It's about choosing kindness over judgment, forgiveness over resentment, generosity over greed.

So fearing Adonai isn't just about some internal feeling or abstract belief. It's about putting it into practice. Making choices that reflect God's character and demonstrate our trust in his wisdom.

You got it. And that's where this deep dive into chapter 28 gets really practical. It's not just about ancient philosophy or theological debates.

It's about how we live, how we relate to God, how we treat each other, and how we navigate the complexities of human experience. This is blowing my mind. I know, it's a lot.

I feel like we've only scratched the surface of this chapter. There's definitely a lot more to unpack, but I think we've laid a good foundation for understanding the significance of chapter 28 and how it sets the stage for everything that follows in the book. Okay.

So we've talked about wisdom as the foundation of creation, the challenge of surrendering to God's authority, and the ethical implications of fearing Adonai. So what's next in our exploration of Job 28? Okay, so we're back and ready to kind of wrap up our deep dive into Job chapter 28. Yeah, it's been quite a journey, exploring this whole idea of wisdom as the foundation of creation and that challenge of fearing Adonai, surrendering to God's authority, even when we don't really understand.

Yeah. Yeah, and it's amazing how this ancient text still speaks so powerfully to our modern struggles, you know? It really does. I mean, we all face those moments when life throws us a curveball, right? Right.

And we're tempted to demand answers, question God's fairness. Absolutely. But chapter 28, it offers this different path, an invitation to lean into the mystery and trust in God's wisdom, even when it's hard.

Yeah, it's not easy. It's not. But it's definitely a path worth exploring.

And we've talked about how that trust, it's not passive, you know? It's about making choices that reflect God's goodness. Yes. It's about shunning evil and aligning our actions with a higher purpose.

It is. But there's one more piece of this puzzle that we need to explore. Yeah, you're right.

There's a subtle but really profound distinction that chapter 28 makes between God having wisdom and God being the source of wisdom. Okay. Yeah.

I remember you touched on this earlier. Yeah. It's like we often think of God's attributes, you know, like wisdom, power, love, as these like separate qualities that he possesses, like items on a checklist.

Like he has this and this and this. Yeah, exactly. But you're saying it's deeper than that.

Much, much deeper. Okay. Chapter 28, it doesn't just say God is wise.

It suggests that wisdom finds its very definition in God. It flows from him. It's an expression of his very being.

So it's not just that God possesses wisdom; it's that God is the ultimate source and standard of wisdom. That's right. And everything that we understand as wise ultimately originates from him.

Exactly. And this has huge implications for how we understand God's actions. Even when we don't understand them.

Right, right. You know, if wisdom is rooted in God's very nature, then we can trust that even his actions that seem confusing or painful to us are ultimately expressions of this deeper wisdom. That's a profound thought.

It is. It's like saying that even when we can't see the whole picture, even when things feel wrong or unfair, we can trust that God is operating from a place of perfect wisdom. Exactly.

It doesn't mean that we won't question or struggle, but it gives us a foundation for that trust. Okay, yeah. Yeah.

Which brings us back to that idea of fearing Adonai, surrendering to God's authority. It isn't about being afraid of him. It's about recognizing his infinite wisdom and trusting that he knows what he's doing.

Precisely. It's about letting go of our need to control, to understand everything, and embracing the mystery of God's plan. It's saying, you know, God, I don't get it, but I trust you.

And that's where true faith takes root, you know, in that space between our limited understanding and the vastness of God's wisdom. It's a humbling realization, isn't it? It is. It's recognizing that our human attempts to define wisdom are ultimately pointing back to something much, much greater than ourselves, something we can only glimpse but never fully grasp.

Right. It is humbling, but it's also incredibly liberating. Because when we let go of that need to figure everything out and have all the answers, we open ourselves up to a deeper experience of faith and trust.

And that trust, it can carry us through those difficult seasons, you know, when life doesn't make sense, when we're faced with suffering or loss, when we're tempted to doubt God's goodness. Remembering that wisdom finds its definition in God allows us to approach those challenges with a different posture, you know, with a sense of surrender and trust that even when we don't understand, God is still working, still loving, still guiding us towards something beautiful. Wow.

This has been an incredible deep dive. We've covered so much ground, you know, from mining for wisdom to fearing Adonai, from wrestling with suffering to surrendering to God's authority. Yeah.

And I hope our listeners will continue to ponder these questions, you know. Long after this episode ends, the Book of Job and this profound chapter on wisdom offer timeless insights into the human experience. It's a reminder that even amidst suffering and uncertainty, there's a deeper wisdom at play, a wisdom that invites us to trust, to surrender, and to embrace the mystery of God's love.

And as we navigate the complexities of our own lives, may we always remember that God's wisdom is greater than our own and His love endures forever. Well, thank you so much for joining us on this deep dive into Job chapter 28. It's been a pleasure.

We hope it's sparked some new insights for you and inspired you to explore this ancient text with fresh eyes. Absolutely. Thanks again for listening, everyone.