

1. I was debating whether to call this section, "the end of the debate" or "That's it, Job's had enough of this bunch of goofballs". I picked the later just because it's more fun. The good news is for us is the debate is over. We get a final whopping six-verses from one of the three "big mouths" who never tire of telling Job must have sinned horribly to be in the condition he's in. Then Job gives a last response as if to say to them, "Good riddance to all three of you". He gives a six-chapter rant as if to say, "I can't take this anymore. You haven't proven anything about why I'm suffering or how God works in the world, so go away and leave me alone." I'm not going to cover all of it in this lesson. The last few chapters of this speech give Job's conclusion about how God works. It'll be the topic of the next lesson. After that, a new guy shows up to give his opinion about how God works and then God Himself chimes in for essentially the remainder of the book. I think He is tired of everyone else talking about He works so He speaks to set the record straight. That's a good summary of the rest of the book. Time for the details of these four chapters.
2. Let me start with the shortest chapter in Job, Chapter 25. Bildad, (one of the three guys Job's had to endlessly debate for most of this book), gives the final speech of the three friends. "His main point is how can you (Job) tell God anything? No one is righteous in God's eyes, so deal with that." I'm convinced he kept it short as if to say, "We're not getting anywhere in this debate, so I'm washing my hands of Job here with some final words."
 - a) In Chapter 26, Job starts with one last "chew out" of Bildad and assumedly the other guys. Job's six-chapter speech is not one big response. After a few verses directed at Bildad, Job is done with all of them. The rest of Job's speech (his final of the book) is more of a "How God works" speech based on the evidence of the world around him speech. Here we'll get a mish-mash of topics. Job's had enough of the back and forth debate and wants to put it all to an end with an understanding of how God works, deal with it as that's that.
 - b) Keep in mind why Job wants to do all of this. He's lost all his extensive wealth, his family and his health. He has no idea why it happened, and there is no great unconfessed sin that he needed to confess. Therefore, Job still wants to be a good witness for God in spite of all of this and defends himself and more importantly defends how God works. It's his way of being a good witness in spite of the cards he's been dealt. He gives the multi-chapter final response, not to get one last dig at his friends, but to explain why God works the way that He does. Job explains what can and cannot be known about God in this final section of the debate, as well as the importance of acquiring wisdom to live out life.
 - c) Before I move on, I'd like to give my favorite illustration on what's the difference between intelligence, knowledge and wisdom: If one is hungry and there's food available near by, knowledge is knowing the food is there. Intelligence is how fast it'd takes to figure out to eat the food would satisfy our hunger. Wisdom is the actual eating of the food. Yes that's an overly simple example, but it helps to separate those terms. I'm meet many intelligent people who lack the wisdom to live as God desires we do. That's the point here and it's an underlying theme of what Job's going to argue as we read our way through Job's final and longest speech in the book.
3. Speaking of Job's response, let me talk about it a little: Job starts as he loves to do by giving some illustrations comparing life and death to how God works. For example, Job will give examples of the "size of things" such as cloud covering, the sun and moon to the extent of God's power given that He made all those things. Job then gives examples of power forces of nature such as a storm at sea that God can use to accomplish some purpose that's often beyond our understanding. The point of all of that is simply to show that God can work in ways greater than we can grasp. Since Job is suffering horribly in pain, in effect all he can conclude is there's no reason he nor his friends were able to figure out why he is suffering. It's his way of saying, "we can't solve the riddle of my suffering, so let's just chalk it up to God's power at work, and let it go at that".

4. In Chapter 27 and 28 is Job's next speech. Each section begins with a "Job continues" comment. He tells us that he admits he's stuck to his guns as far as maintaining his innocence before God. He's telling his friends they're wrong about their accusations of unconfessed sin. With that statement out of his system (in poetic language of course), Job feels free to return to his dialogue explaining to us how God works. Then Job returns to what I'd argue is his favorite topic, explaining how the wicked will suffer in the end. He discusses how mining works (for gold or other valuable metals or jewels). The point is that searching for God's wisdom is far greater than all the work needed to gather those metals and jewels. He ends that speech with a reminder that God knows everything and will still judge people. The point being a life spent just perusing money, pleasure, or success is in the end a waste of a life.
5. OK then, why should I care about all this stuff? What's in it for me? If we already believe in God and believe He judges us and it's a waste of a life to ignore Him, why should I read further, since I believe all of that? At the least, Job will give us some good points to make if we're dealing with someone who doesn't believe in God's existence in the first place. Next, it'll help to validate our faith when we have our own moments of doubt. Finally, Job reminds us of the reality that God is there and of His judgment. Let's be honest, it's so easy for us to get our minds off of God and onto whatever is the issue of the moment. Sometimes we all need a reminder of the reality of God and what it is He desires for us. We get that by studying His word. Hopefully that'll encourage us to read further. Therefore, let's start on the verse by verse commentary of these chapters.
6. Chapter 25, Verse 1: Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: ² "Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven. ³ Can his forces be numbered? Upon whom does his light not rise?
 - a) If you haven't noticed by now, lately I like to start with good news. The good news here is that we only have six verses by Bildad, and then we're done with all three of Job's friends trying to convict him of sin. Realize when God speaks up in about a dozen chapters from now, one of the things He does is condemn these three guys as being wrong about Job. I always want to keep that in mind as we read all their arguments. Yes, they do make some legitimate points about God, but they're wrong in their application. As I said back in my first Job lesson, it's a little like lecturing someone on the evil of murder, but they're guilty of stealing and not murder. All three of Job's friends are "bark up the wrong tree" in what they're accusing Job of doing. OK, enough background. Onto the verses themselves.
 - b) Remember Job just finished a three-chapter discussion on how God works in the last three chapters. Bildad's response opens with the fact that he too acknowledges that God exists and He "organizes" the heavens.
 - i) It'd probably help a little here to realize that the bible consistently speaks of three heavens. The "first heaven" is the atmosphere. The "second heaven" is outer space and the third heaven is where God reigns. Therefore, when Bildad is referring to "heights of heavens", he's only talking about what God created, which is the first and the second heavens. It's a technical point, but it needs to be established.
 - ii) Bildad's essential point is that God's "beyond figuring out". Job explained over the last bunch of chapters his view on how God works. Bildad's response is essentially God's too big to comprehend. We can know some stuff about how God works by looking up at the sky and realizing something greater than what we see must have created all of this. It couldn't have just appeared by accident.
 - iii) Anyway, Bildad's main point is that what God has accomplished in creating everything is that God's beyond our ability to fully grasp as He's "too big for that".
 - iv) Time for a quick fun deviation. If you have any atheist or agnostic acquaintances, ask how the world is so "finely balanced". For example if we were a little closer to the sun life wouldn't work. If the moon was closer, the tides would wipe us out. I am just saying there is lots of evidence that our life system is finely balanced. It is an argument for God's existence as someone had to "balance all of that".

7. Verse 4: How then can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure? ⁵ If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, ⁶ how much less man, who is but a maggot-- a son of man, who is only a worm!"
- a) Let's begin by recalling that Job just finished a three chapter speech explaining how God is working in our world. Bildad's essential response is who are we to question what He does in our world? We're "nothing" before God, so who are we to explain how God works?
 - b) That leads to the theological question of why did God create an imperfect world. None of us are perfect, so why did God create a world where evil exists, bad things happen and no person is perfect. My first answer would be to see if we still trust Him in spite of whatever we must deal with in life. My second answer is that if we accept that a perfect God exists, it is a reminder that we can never be good enough for Him, so we shouldn't even try. That is the great mistake most people make, trying to be good enough that He will accept them as they are. A fundamental point about Christianity is we can never be good enough for God. We must just accept He exists and He paid for our sins. Living under God's rules is the best way for us to live and makes us a good witness for others, but it will never make us "good enough" for God. In that sense, Bildad's right about God.
 - c) So what's the deal with the sun and stars not being pure in God's eyes. It's simply a figure of speech to indicate that the world we live in is not perfect. We must not take it as more than that. As I like to point out every lesson, we are reading poetry!
 - d) So why end his speech with the view that we're "nothing" before God? Personally, I think it is Bildad throwing up his hands in disgust at Job. It's as if he's thinking, "all our debate has been a big waste of time". He's saying man is "nothing" before God. Since Job refuses to repent in Bildad's eyes, since no one is right in God's eyes, I think Bildad and even the other two friends are "washing their hands" of Job as if to say, "Job, haven't you learned anything by now? We can't argue with a perfect God and neither can you. Stop trying to tell us how God works when we're "nothing" in his eyes." That's Bildad's argument.
 - e) The good news is Job responds to this and puts an end to the debate.
8. Chapter 26, Verse 1: Then Job replied: ² "How you have helped the powerless! How you have saved the arm that is feeble! ³ What advice you have offered to one without wisdom! And what great insight you have displayed!
- a) Try to visualize how Job looked. Here was a man sitting in great pain. The early chapters said he scraped boils off his skin. Yes it's disgusting. My point is none of these three guys did anything to try to help Job in his condition. All they did was criticize him for some sin that he didn't commit to explain how Job got that way.
 - b) With that in mind, re-read these verses. Picture Job as the "powerless". He's criticizing his friends for not helping him. In Verse 3, Job is stating that they've (the "you" is plural) have no insight into how God works that Job himself doesn't have. In other words, his friends failed to explain why it is Job is suffering the way he has been since the early chapters of this book. Just as the three friends are giving up trying to explain Job's condition, He has given up listening to them speak as they've been no help to this situation.
 - c) Let me stand back and ask, if all this debate ended in a stalemate, why does the story have so many chapters leading to that stalemate? What's the purpose of the debate? Part of it is when we deal with horrid pain, it goes "on and on" and doesn't improve for a long time. It is a way of relating to going through something like that. Next it's a reminder that people can't always solve our problems. Sometimes God steps in and often time helps, as we are made with a "self correcting" healing of physical wounds in many cases. (Think about a cut that gets better over time.). Finally, there are many situations we go through where a good "talking it out" helps us to deal with whatever we're dealing with. My simple point is all of this was necessary for us to understand the good and bad of these three friends as well as the point that Job never sinned despite the endless criticism.
 - d) The other news is Job's just getting warmed up here. Let's continue.

9. Verse 4: Who has helped you utter these words? Who has helped you utter these words?
 - a) I think it's occurring to Job, that these three guys are a bunch of "big mouths" who make a few good points about God, but miss the mark in terms of how a Christian or even how a devout Jewish person should act. It's not godly because all Bildad's doing is arguing that Job isn't perfect but won't touch the idea that maybe Job's right, that he is forgiven and not guilty of any great sin.
 - b) This is Job saying at this point, "Why don't you just shut up"? Officially, he's accusing his friends of having a demonic spirit influence their words, but it's the same idea.
 - c) Let me ask a great question: If we believe that angelic and demonic forces exist, how can we tell if we're being influenced by a positive or negative entity? It's actually easier than we think. If the advice is biblical or just plain good common sense (all of it) we can say it is Godly advice. If we're telling someone it's ok to steal or cheat this one time, then it's the opposite. Obviously, we don't know if it's our own thoughts, or dark forces influencing it, but the point is the only way we can tell is based on the words coming out of our mouth.
 - d) That's why Job's making this accusation. He's saying in effect, "Christians don't act how it is the way you've been acting". OK, now that he's said that, onto Verse 5.
10. Verse 5: "The dead are in deep anguish, those beneath the waters and all that live in them. ⁶Death is naked before God; Destruction lies uncovered.
 - a) One of the things I've been avoiding in my study of Job, is a discussion of the mythology of that day. Occasionally Job makes a reference, which probably tie to mythological views of that day dealing with where dead souls go. I've been avoiding that topic as I don't find it "fruitful" to teach such things other than to learn bible trivia.
 - b) However, I need to get into it a little here only because this verse describes the dead living beneath the waters (oceans). Yes, it could simply refer to those who die at sea, but I think it's more than that. It's describing the dead in general. It's probably tied to mythology of Job's time that deals with where souls live. Is it literally possibly that condemned souls do reside in the center of earth? My answer is who knows? It's possible, since souls have no weight, but since none of it can be proved, I'll let bored bible scholars debate that one.
 - c) What Job's point in context is, the fact that despite all the arguing his friends made, none of their arguments change who's dead and who's not. Yes they all agree God judges men, but as it doesn't affect the lives of those who lived, died and don't care about God.
 - d) The related point is God knows who's dead and where they reside after they die. Verse 6 is making that point.
11. Verse 7: He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. ⁸ He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight. ⁹ He covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. ¹⁰ He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness.
 - a) The good news is Job got his mind off the grizzly stuff and starts focusing on the fact that God made everything. I suspect Job was laying there in pain, staring at the sky and he is thinking, "Wait a minute, God made everything I'm looking at. Why am I worried about what others think of me?" (A good thing to keep in mind when we're being criticized.)
 - b) Yes he's being colorful, but again, we're reading poetry. I could get into some specifics about Job's knowledge of geology, but there's not much application there. Notice Job is aware that the earth is round and doesn't for example, sit on the back of a big turtle. I've always liked the expression that the bible isn't a science book, but when it does describe scientific facts, it's accurate. There are bible scholars out there specializing in studying all of that stuff. Me, I focus on "I believe in Jesus, now what?" OK then, let's move on.
12. Verse 11: The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke.
 - a) Ok, I'll bite. What are the pillars of heaven? Is something literally holding heaven up? In the bible, there are few chapters in Isaiah and Revelation where a literal room stands. It is where God is located. If we're going to be with God forever, it must be something literal.

- b) So I don't know if Job's being literal or poetic. Either way, his point is when nature works in a powerful way, such as loud thunder, a hurricane or tornado, it's as if the heavens are literally shaking, referring to the atmosphere around us.
 - c) Job's simple point is that God can work in powerful ways when He chooses to. That leads to the natural question, why does God allow such horrible destruction to occur? Yes the classic answer is we live in a sin-cursed world. The other pat answer is sometimes God is reminding us that He's there and not to be messed with. The positive thing about horrid tragedies is the way people work together to help each other deal with them. That is one reason life is worth living to watch people do good to help others in need. I can't explain why such horror exists. I've seen some really good people die to horrid tragedies. All we can do, is do our best to be a good witness for God through such situations.
 - d) In the meantime, Job's got three more verses of this, in this chapter.
13. Verse 12: By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces. ¹³ By his breath the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent. ¹⁴ And these are but the outer fringe of his works; how faint the whisper we hear of him! Who then can understand the thunder of his power?"
- a) Earlier I talked about the fact that Job makes reference to cultural myths of that day. Here we get a reference to some sort of ancient sea monster named Rahab, that apparently God "cut to pieces". Could it be something literal? I wouldn't put it past God. The truth is we don't know. All we can do is read text in context and try to figure out how this applies to our lives. Could "Rehab" be some sort of metaphor for Satan? Don't know. I suspect it's some sort of ancient myth, but I'll leave it at that.
 - b) The main point of this chapter is God can and often does work in powerful ways. We are getting all of this as a rebuke to Job's friends. I'd argue that Job's underlying point, is God does work in powerful ways and that's why Job had to suffer so much. He's arguing that he didn't do anything wrong. It's just the "consequences" of living in a sinful world where God works in powerful ways and sometimes we're the victims of the power of nature like when a hurricane, tornado or earthquake strike.
 - c) The good news is Job doesn't write this way all through this lesson. He's just getting out of his system, the fact that God works in powerful ways at times and people suffer due to those powerful "forces of nature". OK then, Chapter 27.
14. Chapter 27, Verse 1: And Job continued his discourse: ² "As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made me taste bitterness of soul, ³ as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, ⁴ my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit.
- a) As you can tell, Job's still in the "poor, poor pitiful me" mode here. It's easy to forget that he has suffered arguably more than any man in history. It's easy to forget that he wrote or spoke at this time in horrid pain. I'm sure the physical pain reminded him of that even as he was putting these words together. My point is we shouldn't dismiss Job's physical pain as we read through this dialogue.
 - b) OK, enough background. Job's complaining that God has "denied him justice" and he has "bitterness of soul" here. The positive news is that Job admits he refuses to sin despite all that he's been through. Remember that's what the bet between God and Satan was about! I think this is Job's way of saying, "I'm not perfect, I've suffered horribly, but despite all of that, I refuse to "sin on purpose" and be a bad witness for God.
 - c) Time for a quick "you and me" moment. The great question we go through in tough times is "Are we still being a good witness for God" in spite of all that? Yes we can still cry out as the pain hurts, but do we still do our best to avoid sin in those situations? No we don't have to be perfect, but God always desires we be a good witness for Him through all we have to deal with in life. If we can do that, life's pains become bearable.
 - d) On that positive note, ready for the next verse.

15. Verse 6: I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity. ⁶ I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live.
- a) As my lesson title implied, this is Job saying, "I've had enough of you three, go away! It is an admission that Job has no great unconfessed sin and refuses to "make one up" to get all three of these guys off his back. As I've stated a few times in these Job studies, it must have been tempting for Job to want to confess something just to end the debate. The reason Job stuck to his guns is he'd be sinning by lying if he just made up a sin. It's his way of stating his innocence in terms of being a good witness for God. Remember that Job's not claiming to be perfect. He's just stating there is no great unconfessed sin that explains why he must suffer the way he's suffering. That's the point here.
 - b) As I've stated a few times in these lessons, one of the great things to accept about being a Christian is when we let go of a sin and turn from it, God does forgive us. He doesn't say to us, "I expected more out of you!" and continue to condemn us for our sins. We tend to be much harder on ourselves than God is. That's because we think, "Why did I mess up so badly?" Our ego's demand more of ourselves than we're capable of doing. All I'm saying is if God can forgive us, why can't we forgive ourselves? The corollary is, forgiveness isn't a "license to sin". We still need to avoid sin as it makes us a bad witness for God. That is what Job's doing his best to try to do here and it's a good lesson for us.
16. Verse 7: "May my enemies be like the wicked, my adversaries like the unjust!
- a) I don't know if Job's directing this at his three friends or his "enemies in general". Let me bring up a topic most Christians don't consider. To love God, also means we're to hate all that He hates. That includes sin and people who refuse to turn from sin. Of course, God wants us to be a good witness to all people. However, if we encounter someone who will refuse to turn from their lifestyle to live as God desires, we're to realize that God hates all sin. Job's "enemies" are those who refuse to trust in God.
 - i) But doesn't Job's three friends believe in God? Yes, but they also refuse to believe Job when he claims he's innocent of an unconfessed sin. To live the Christian life includes the idea of trusting the believer assuming of course that a person can be trusted with God's truth. Job's three friends believed that Job believed in God. It is a matter of them not believing his words about unconfessed sin. That concept makes them an enemy for the moment.
 - ii) That leads me back to the topic of hating what God hates. It doesn't mean we are to write off all unbelievers as sinners and walk away. It just means we're to hate the deeds of those who refuse to turn to God and do our best to be a good witness for Him in spite of whatever it is we're facing. That's an example of how we're to "Hate what God hates". OK, enough of that, back to Job.
17. Verse 8: For what hope has the godless when he is cut off, when God takes away his life?
- a) Let me talk about God's judgment for the moment. The classic question is does God judge children who die before they know right from wrong? What about aborted babies? What about those who live in places that never heard the Gospel message? How does He judge all those people? The related question is, "Is an eternity of hell fair judgment for a lifetime of ignoring God?" (You just know I love this stuff!) Here goes
 - b) First, I don't think God has the same judgment for all people. I'm convinced He is going to judge us based on what knowledge we have about Him or could have had about Him. If we live in a society where the bible is available and we ignore it, big trouble! As to the question of why eternity for a lifetime of sin? It's a simple matter of giving people what they want. An eternity away from His presence. There's a famous line that "The gates of hell will be locked from the inside" (C.S. Lewis) as it's people who don't want God.
 - c) As to the innocent, heaven will be full of people who never had the opportunity to hear of His love and grace because they died young or lived where there was no message.

- d) A reason I sleep well at night is I believe in a God who has perfect knowledge and judges people fairly. Don't ask me to do that, is I can't judge people's hearts. Only He can!
 - e) Time for context: Job just condemned the wicked to hell. I suspect Job's taking a shot at his three friends. Because they refused to believe Job and made no effort to help him, it's fair of Job to condemn their actions and lack of actions. It's a subtle way of saying here is the fate that awaits all people who refuse to be a good witness for God with their lives.
 - f) Yes, this is tough stuff. We're plowing our way through it. Let's continue:
18. Verse 9: Does God listen to his cry when distress comes upon him?
- a) This is one of those verses that must be read in context. It's not saying God ignores every person who cries out to Him. Job's talking about those who ignore Him all their lives.
 - b) This leads to the classic question of, "Is there a "too late" with God?" I'd argue there is but we have no idea when the "too late" is. I've seen people go down a path in life of alcohol nightly, and never turn from it until it's too late. I've also seen some on their deathbed do make a sincere conversion to Jesus after living a horrid lifestyle. All I'm saying is God is in charge of who gets to be with Him forever in heaven, not us. Our job is to be a witness for Him in this life. As one man I read puts it, "Don't go down that road, it's greased and it's hard to turn back". That's the underlying point of this verse.
19. Verse 10: Will he find delight in the Almighty? Will he call upon God at all times?
- a) There's a classic statement in Christianity that we can't judge people's eternal fate, but we can definitely judge their actions. Job's describing people for the most part ignore God all of their lives. Most of the time, their lives without God end the way they lived it out. That is the essence of Job's point here.
 - b) OK then, how do we judge actions? That's why we have prisons. A person in prison may sincerely turn to God, but must still serve out their prison term for what they did. When a person sins, it is not our job to fix them. At the same time, sin isn't to be tolerated among those of us who call themselves Christians. Jesus gives a sermon on dealing with sin for a believer in Matthew 18. The short version is confront a person one on one. If they won't change, then come back with a witness. If that isn't resolved, then it goes to the church for discipline. Again, I'm not saying we all have to be perfect. I'm saying that we must make the effort to turn from sin and yes hold each other accountable.
 - c) Enough tangents for one verse. Let's move on.
20. Verse 11: "I will teach you about the power of God; the ways of the Almighty I will not conceal. You have all seen this yourselves. Why then this meaningless talk?"
- a) One of the basic principals of both Judaism and Christianity is that God is knowable. No we can't know everything about Him, but He does reveal a lot about Himself in His word as well as in nature. In other words, we can look up in the sky and realize something that is greater than "this" must have made all of this. We can also watch humanity and figure out a few things about how God works just by watching people. That's essentially what Job is trying to say in Verse 11. Remember he's giving a six chapter speech essentially on the topic of how God works.
 - i) Time for the why question: Because for a ridiculous number of chapters now, we got a back and forth debate on why Job is suffering. All of it in a sense was a big waste of time as nobody budged an inch on their opinions about why Job suffered so badly. It's also to say, "Wait a minute, we all agree that God judges people after we die. What does any of that have to do with suffering in this lifetime?" It's Job's way of saying all three of his buddies were wrong about God all this time!
 - b) OK John, we can tell you're dying to give one of your "why should we care speeches". Hit us and get it out of your system! Arguments like this are helpful at the least to teach how it is God works in our world. In other words you don't need to "pound the bible" to share with others how God works in the world. The evidence of the world around us does that. All I'm saying is Job is a great study on how to be a good witness to nonbelievers!

21. Verse 12: "Here is the fate God allots to the wicked, the heritage a ruthless man receives from the Almighty: ¹⁴ However many his children, their fate is the sword; his offspring will never have enough to eat. ¹⁵ The plague will bury those who survive him, and their widows will not weep for them.
- a) Whenever you read a bible verse, one must read it in context. If you read these verses out of context, they contradict other bible principals. One biblical principal is children do not have to eternally suffer for the sins of their parents. A principal most of us know well, is the fact that children often suffer for their parent's sins. Children of alcoholics have to live with their parents. I like the expression, "If we avoid half the mistakes of our parents we'll do well in life". (Dennis Prager). Anyway, Job's sort of stating that idea about the wicked. It's the idea that their wickedness will make those around them suffer just as they must suffer for their fate.
 - b) With that speech out of m system, let's look at the verses again. They say that wicked ones still have children, but those children "suffer the fate of the sword" and "they will not have enough to eat" (paraphrasing). Job's not saying that God punishes children for the sins of their parents. They just suffer for being "in the neighborhood" so to speak.
 - c) I doubt Job has anyone in mind as he makes this speech. He's just building a case for how God works in making the wicked suffer. His underlying point is God is a God of Justice, and just because Job's suffering, means he did something horrible to earn that fate!
 - d) Meanwhile, Job's still on a role describing wicked people!
22. Verse 16: Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, ¹⁷ what he lays up the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver.
- a) Again context is everything. Stop and think about some famous wealthy person who now is dead. Did the "righteous" get to inherit their stuff? No, their children got it. So what is Job talking about here? In a sense, it's about eternity. It's about the idea that all of us who put their trust in God will eventually win in the end, since we all live for eternity.
 - b) So does all of this mean there are things to wear for eternity, and we deal with things like silver and gold in heaven? Who knows. I don't picture heaven as being something boring. I figure God's going to give us things to do as we spend eternity drawing close to Him. So do we have clothing and deal with "valuables"? I have enough to worry about dealing in things of this lifetime. I figure if God is God, He'll work out the eternity stuff His way!
 - c) The real point of this verse is the "wicked don't win in the end". It's part of Job's argument that he's not one of them and just because he's suffering means God's punishing him.
23. Verse 18: The house he builds is like a moth's cocoon, like a hut made by a watchman. ¹⁹ He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more; when he opens his eyes, all is gone.
- a) The general idea here is that a wicked person who acquires a lot of wealth, will not get to enjoy it for all of eternity, as sooner or later that person will die. We've beaten that point to death by now, so we'll move on.
24. Verse 20: Terrors overtake him like a flood; a tempest snatches him away in the night. ²¹ The east wind carries him off, and he is gone; it sweeps him out of his place. ²² It hurls itself against him without mercy as he flees headlong from its power. ²³ It claps its hands in derision and hisses him out of his place.
- a) Job finishes this section by getting more graphic about the death of wicked people. This is poetry but it's pretty self explanatory even in the English translation. It's sort of the idea of "You're arms are too short to box with God" which was a famous play a generation ago. It is saying no one beats death.
 - b) These verses all give colorful ways of saying, everybody dies. One may be rich or famous, but it won't matter forever, as it's not worth being wicked to achieve those things.
 - c) The good part is we're moving into Chapter 28, my favorite of this group. It's a wonderful poem about the greatness of Godly wisdom. It makes up for the horrid graphic images of the last chapter.

25. Chapter 28, Verse 1: "There is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. ² Iron is taken from the earth, and copper is smelted from ore.
- a) Of all things, we switch to a mining discussion. Chapter 28 is essentially a self-contained poem on the wisdom of God. That'll become obvious in a manner of verses. Remember my analogy of the difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is knowing a fact. Wisdom is the application of a fact that needs to be applied. I'm starting with that as Job's going to give us a lecture in this chapter essentially on what is Godly wisdom, who it is who has it and who doesn't. I suspect Job's reason for this lecture is his friends are full of knowledge about God, but little wisdom. That's why he's still going off on them, (in a manner of speaking) using God's wisdom as an analogy.
 - b) That leads us back to the strange illustration of where precious metals come from. Those things don't just stick up out of the ground naturally. They have to be mined in order to get them. Job's going to making the point that just as those precious metals are gathered from mining operations, so we must "mine" (make the effort) to get God's wisdom. That's the point here. Speaking of which, back to Job's mining illustration:
26. Verse 3: Man puts an end to the darkness; he searches the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness. ⁴ Far from where people dwell he cuts a shaft, in places forgotten by the foot of man; far from men he dangles and sways.
- a) As always context is everything. "Darkness" in context is referring to mining shafts that are cut out of the ground mining for gold and other jewels. I suspect Job and his friends all knew a little about how ancient mining worked, which is why it's his example here.
 - b) What is implied in these verses is that even in ancient times, there were "straight across" holes cut out to send air down to the lower parts where such miners work. While we're learning a few facts about ancient mining that I doubt most of us cared about, what is to be grasped here is just as a lot of effort was needed to mine jewels, so a lot of effort and time in life is needed to grasp wisdom.
 - i) Think of it this way. Are you smarter today then you were 10 years ago? Did it require specific studies on wisdom? No, life just teaches you about wisdom and how to make good decisions. The point is if we make the effort to learn to live as God desires we live, then we're getting wisdom whether we realize it or not.
 - ii) OK then, back to the mine shaft.
27. Verse 5: The earth, from which food comes, is transformed below as by fire; ⁶ sapphires come from its rocks, and its dust contains nuggets of gold.
- a) Just to warn you, most of this chapter deals with mining related images. If that subject bores you, just keep in mind it's only there as an analogy for learning about wisdom as it applies to life. I've met lots of people who have tremendous knowledge about subjects. It is another to have Godly wisdom. The point is life is far more appreciated when we learn how to have and apply that wisdom. That's why we're here in the first place. Ok then, it is time to get back to the mine shaft.
 - b) The point of Verse 5 is food grows on the surface (think wheat, trees, etc.). Below all of it, those mines come from fire as tools are used to remove those precious stones. His point is below what is grown, men work to gather things, just like wisdom requires work to get!
28. Verse 7: No bird of prey knows that hidden path, no falcon's eye has seen it. ⁸ Proud beasts do not set foot on it, and no lion prowls there. ⁹ Man's hand assaults the flinty rock and lays bare the roots of the mountains. ¹⁰ He tunnels through the rock; his eyes see all its treasures. ¹¹ He searches the sources of the rivers and brings hidden things to light.
- a) The point is these mining shafts are not like caves where wild animals gather. Mines are deep holes cut in the earth. I know all of this seems strange to read. We are getting to a point here to compare all of this to wisdom. That begins in Verse 12, so these verses will be the last of the mining operation verses.

- b) Ok, besides the "no wild animal" parts, what's the point here. It is that people are willing to tunnel deep to gather these rocks. Think about earning a living. There must be an end user for those things, or why would anyone bother to dig them out and go through all this trouble? The obvious connection of course, is wisdom is worth the trouble. That leads us to the good news, a direct comparison to wisdom beginning in the next verse.
29. Verse 12: "But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? ¹³ Man does not comprehend its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. ¹⁴ The deep says, 'It is not in me'; the sea says, 'It is not with me.'
- a) Let's start here by remembering we are talking about a specific type of wisdom: Knowing what God's will is for our lives. There is obviously wisdom on lots of topics as the worst of people have the wisdom to say acquire things. The underlying issue here is how do we live as God desires we live? After all, if we were created by God to bring Him glory, then there must be a way to discover that type of wisdom. If Job is the oldest book in the bible, then it has to be something more than just studying it, which of course I don't discount!
 - b) Remember we're reading poetry. Job's getting colorful here as he's trying to describe the fact that biblical wisdom (learning how God wants us to live in obedience to Him) is only found through trusting in Him. One of the great mistakes many people make is they are trying to be good enough for God. His response is trust Me and then He works through us to live as He desires. That's why Job's saying biblical wisdom won't be found "in the land of the living". It comes from trusting God alone.
 - c) Let's pause to ponder why Job is giving this little sermon. His friends have been accusing him of some great sin through most of the book. Job's response in effect is the wisdom of knowing how to live comes from God and not through man's knowledge. It's Job's way of saying, I know I'm living as He desires, not because I'm perfect, but only because I trust in Him and I want to please Him by how I live. OK enough of my two cents, back to Job.
30. Verse 15: It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed in silver. ¹⁶ It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or sapphires.
- a) The poetry continues. The essential point here is one can't buy that knowledge no matter how much wealth one has. Knowing what God desires of us can only come by trusting in Him. It's free to those who ask. Therefore, Job's getting colorful by describing what is the most valuable things of his day as if to say, "All of that isn't good enough".
 - b) Time to step back again. What if you're thinking, "How do I know if I'm good enough to be pleasing to God?" The answer is you're breathing. For the doubters, trust in Him, trust He wants to guide our lives. Surrender our will to His and He promises to guide us as He wants us to live. For the rest of us, this is the reminder we can't add to what God's already done for us, so we have to remember to stop trying. Ok, off my soapbox. Back to it.
31. Verse 17: Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold. ¹⁸ Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention; the price of wisdom is beyond rubies. ¹⁹ The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it; it cannot be bought with pure gold.
- a) Three more verses of ways one cannot buy the wisdom of how to live like God desires. It just occurred to me that Job has a lot of mining knowledge. This is a man who lived when Abraham lived (more or less). The opening chapters of this book said he got his wealth in raising animals. Yet, the last chapter explained his intimate knowledge of how jewels are mined. Here we learn Job's knowledge of different types of jewels and the locations they are mined in his area. Yes it's trivial, but it shows that Job knew a lot about life and didn't say, "Spend all his time studying his bible". If nothing else, it shows that it's ok to spend a little time learning about things in life. In effect, they all become examples of how God is working in this world. Yes that's stating the obvious, but it helps to point it out once in a while to help us think about how God works.
 - b) The good news is we're done with jewels as a comparison to God's wisdom. The last nine verses focus on understanding exactly where God's wisdom does come from.

32. Verse 20: "Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell?"²¹ It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds of the air.
- a) One can't emphasize enough the fact we're reading poetry. Job's trying to get colorful in a way of describing the fact that learning how God wants us to live only comes from Him.
 - b) That is why Job has an "excuse" to give colorful illustrations to say it's "hidden" from all of the people who don't care about God and hidden from animals. What separates us from a different life form is our ability to contemplate God and His desire for our lives. I know I am stating the obvious here, but it's something to contemplate when thinking about how it is we do and don't acquire the wisdom of living as God desires we live!
 - c) Again, remember we've had a few dozen chapters of back and forth debate. Job's way to end all of this is to say in effect, "Wisdom comes from God alone, "so shut up you bunch of goofballs" as I cutely called this lesson. OK then, back to it, we're almost there.
33. Verse 22: Destruction and Death say, 'Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.'
- a) This is Job's colorful way of saying, even when we die, that's the end of end of our ability to acquire such wisdom. But if the wicked die, won't they know God's there when He is judging them? Yes, but that's another example of "too late". We can't plead the "fifth" on judgment day. (For my non-American readers, the fifth amendment of the constitution is the right to not incriminate ourselves). My point is simply there is a too late. That's what Job's implying with his reference to death and our ability to acquire knowledge about the way God wants us to live.
34. Verse 23: God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells,²⁴ for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.²⁵ When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters,²⁶ when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm,²⁷ then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it.
- a) Time for the classical question, "How do I know that if I seek God, I'll start living as it is He desires for me to live?" For starters, we're back to the evidence that God exists. That's what these verses remind us. If we see how life works, it becomes obvious something had to have made all of this. Remember Job didn't have a bible. He saw the evidence of nature and knew that God existed. I'm not saying we can know everything God knows. What is possible is to observe nature and come to the logical conclusion that a God exists. Even if one argues for multiple gods, it eventually would have to come to a single source to create all of this. Yes, I'm establishing the basics here, but it's necessary.
 - b) Next the evidence that we can live as He desires is when we start to trust in His existence then it's just natural to want to please Him. That's what obedience to His laws is about. It is not a matter of trying hard to obey them. We'd fail every time. It's about trusting in the power He gives us (think Holy Spirit) to live as He desires. Then and only then can we be living as God desires.
 - c) The point as it relates to these verses is we can see the evidence of how the Godly live not only by looking at nature but by watching people who use their lives to make a difference for Him. My point is Godly wisdom is out there. It comes by trusting in Him and a desire to live as He desires. That's what Job means by "He looked at wisdom and appraised it".
 - d) OK, I can't leave these verses without talking about work. For the few who don't know, I make a living by appraising real estate. It's rare to see my profession even "hinted at" in the bible, so I needed to get that fact out of my system. Nothing to do with the study, it's just "my thing" and I needed to say it. Ok, then, back to Job.
35. Verse 28: And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'
- a) Job has spent a lot of time in this one chapter poem explaining what wisdom is not. Job spent a lot of time saying where wisdom can't be found. All it really takes is one verse to explain where it can be found. The final verse of the chapter. It's about fearing God in a sense of knowing we're going to be judged and turning from evil.

- b) For some reason, I've been talking to a number of single women lately. I end up giving a short lecture on how to find a good man. My standard advice is to find a man who fears God more than he loves you. That means down the road, he's less likely to cheat because he fears God's wrath. A man like that wants to do what is right in life. The "where" is the great question. However, it helps to teach first, the principal of doing the right thing and then trusting in God to help with the "where". Obviously, I can reverse that and apply it to young men as well. The practical side of this advice is the "shun evil" part. It's usually obvious when it arises. If we fear God's wrath, we just naturally want to do what's right. That's the idea here.
 - c) The good news is we're done for the week. Job's still got a few chapters left of lecturing us on how God works. That'll be a wrap for Job and his friends talking. Thanks as always for putting up with me through my hobby. I hope I given you some good things to consider as we go through life. So with that said, time to close in prayer as we ask for His guidance to live as He wants us to live.
36. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, First we thank You that You have chosen us to be a witness for You to a lost and dying world. Help us to remember you're always there. You're always watching us and our behavior matters. Help us to only rely upon Your power to use the time You've given us to live as You want us to live. Help us by Your power to make a difference for You as we boldly go forward to teach a lost and dying world of Your love. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.