

### **THREE GREAT TRUTHS WE MUST ALWAYS AFFIRM**

*25 Then Bildad the Shuhite said, <sup>2</sup>Dominion and awe belong to [God], he establishes peace in his heights. <sup>3</sup>Can his troops be numbered? Upon whom does his light not rise? <sup>4</sup>How [then] can a man be righteous before God? How can someone born of a woman be pure? <sup>5</sup>If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, <sup>6</sup>how much less is man, who is a maggot, or the son of man, who is a worm?*

*26 Job replied, <sup>2</sup>How have you helped the powerless! How have you saved the feeble arm! <sup>3</sup>What counsel you have given to one who is without wisdom! What helpful insight you have abundantly provided! <sup>4</sup>Who has helped you utter these words? Whose spirit spoke from your mouth?*

*<sup>5</sup>The departed spirits tremble beneath the waters along with those who dwell in those waters. <sup>6</sup>Sheol is naked before [God], and Abaddon has no covering. <sup>7</sup>He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing. <sup>8</sup>He binds the waters in thick clouds, yet the cloud masses do not burst under their weight. <sup>9</sup>He conceals the sight of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it. <sup>10</sup>He marks out the horizon on the surface of the waters as a boundary between light and darkness. <sup>11</sup>The pillars of the heavens quake, being astonished at his rebuke. <sup>12</sup>By his power he calmed the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces. <sup>13</sup>By his breath the skies become clear; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent. <sup>14</sup>And these are only the outer fringe of his works; how faint is the whisper we hear of him! Who then can comprehend the thunder of his power?*

*27 Then Job continued his discourse by saying, <sup>2</sup>As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, <sup>3</sup>as long as I have life in me and the breath of God is in my nostrils, <sup>4</sup>my lips will never bear false testimony, nor will my tongue utter deceit. <sup>5</sup>Far be it from me to declare that you are right; until I die, I will not renounce my integrity. <sup>6</sup>I firmly hold on to my righteousness and will not let it go; my conscience shall not reproach me as long as I live—<sup>7</sup>May my enemy be like the wicked; may my adversary be like the unjust!—<sup>8</sup>for what hope does the godless have when he is cut off, when God takes away his life? <sup>9</sup>Will God listen to his cry when distress comes upon him? <sup>10</sup>Will he [then] take delight in the Almighty? Will he [then] call upon God at all times?*

*<sup>11</sup>I will teach you about God's power; I will not conceal the ways of the Almighty. <sup>12</sup>Indeed, all of you have seen it; why, [then], do you utter such worthless speech? <sup>13</sup>This is the fate God allots to the wicked, this is the tyrant's "inheritance" from the Almighty: <sup>14</sup>Although he may have many children, they are all destined for the sword; his offspring will never have enough to eat. <sup>15</sup>The plague will bury those who survive him, and their widows will not be able to weep [for them]. <sup>16</sup>He may heap up silver like [piles of] dust and clothes like piles of clay, <sup>17</sup>but whatever he accumulates, the righteous will wear; and the innocent will divide his silver. <sup>18</sup>The house he has built is like a spider's web, like a shack made for a watchman. <sup>19</sup>He goes to bed wealthy, but for the last time; when he opens his eyes, he is gone. <sup>20</sup>Terrors overwhelm him like a flood; a tempest snatches him away in the night. <sup>21</sup>The east wind carries him off, and he is gone; it sweeps him from his place. <sup>22</sup>It hurls itself against him without mercy as he tries to flee from its power. <sup>23</sup>Men will clap their hands at him [in derision] and chase him from his community with hissing.*

*28 There is a mine for silver, and a place where gold is refined. <sup>2</sup>Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted from ore. <sup>3</sup>Man puts an end to the darkness; he searches the farthest recesses for ore in the thickest darkness. <sup>4</sup>Far from where people dwell he cuts a shaft, in places forgotten by the foot of man; far from men he dangles and sways [from his rope]. <sup>5</sup>The earth, out of which comes precious stones, is broken up below with fire; <sup>6</sup>sapphires come from its rocks, and its dust contains gold. <sup>7</sup>No bird of prey knows that hidden path, no falcon's eye has seen it. <sup>8</sup>Proud beasts have not set foot there, and no lion prowls there. <sup>9</sup>Man's hand assaults the flinty rock; he overturns the mountains by their roots. <sup>10</sup>He hews out tunnels through the rock; his eyes behold all [the earth's] treasures. <sup>11</sup>He traces the sources of the rivers and brings hidden things to light. <sup>12</sup>But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? <sup>13</sup>Man does not know its residence, and it is not found in the land of the living.*

*<sup>14</sup>The deep says, "It is not in me." The sea says, "It is not with me." <sup>15</sup>It cannot be purchased with the finest gold, nor can its value be weighed in silver. <sup>16</sup>It cannot be bought with even the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or sapphires. <sup>17</sup>Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be obtained in exchange for jewels of gold. <sup>18</sup>Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention; the price of wisdom is beyond rubies. <sup>19</sup>The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it; it cannot be bought with [even] pure gold. <sup>20</sup>From where does wisdom come? Where is the dwelling place of understanding? <sup>21</sup>It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, even concealed from the birds of the sky. <sup>22</sup>Abaddon and Death say, "[Only] a rumor about it has reached our ears." <sup>23</sup>God understands the way to it; he knows where it dwells, <sup>24</sup>for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. <sup>25</sup>When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, <sup>26</sup>when he set a limit for the rain and a course for the thunderbolt, <sup>27</sup>at that time he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he prepared it and examined it. <sup>28</sup>And he said to man, "Listen. The fear of the LORD is wisdom, and turning away from evil is understanding." (Job 25:1-28:28)*

## **Introduction**

Kathy Bartalsky and her husband, Steve, were missionaries in Ethiopia. Steve flew a helicopter bringing the gospel and famine relief to the Ethiopian tribesmen. They had been serving for only two months when on August 4, 1987, Kathy received the report that Steve's helicopter had crashed; both Steve and his passenger had been killed instantly.

Three days after the accident, Kathy felt the need to go out to the crash site to be alone with God. As the LORD ministered to her, she became aware of the necessity of trusting Him and affirming the great truths of His Word—no matter what life experiences we may encounter. In her own words: What I went through I didn't volunteer for. Yet I believe it comes down to these basis questions. Are you going to trust Christ, or aren't you? Are you going to stand on the Word you have been taught, or aren't you? What if I had sat on that hillside and said, "Lord, I can't do it. I can't be Your child anymore. You demand too much from me." Where else could I go? What else in the

world gives me the hope that is in Christ Jesus ... ? (POWER, 3/3/91, pp. 2-ff.)

In the present passage of Job we find Job and his companions coming to the same conclusion: the need to always affirm the great truths of God. Even when we cannot understand God's present dealings with us, it is important that we as Christians continue to affirm the great truths of God.

## I. Let Us Always Affirm the Sovereign Majesty of God

Bildad testifies, *"dominion and awe belong to [God]"* (25:2.) The LORD is the Almighty God who exercises sovereign dominion and complete control over all His creation. This is the very truth King Nebuchadnezzar came to discover:

*... I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven ... Then I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom continues from generation to generation. <sup>35</sup>All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can push away his hand, or demand of him, What are you doing? (Dan. 4:34-35)*

As the sovereign God, the LORD is worthy of all reverence and holy fear: *"There is no one like you, O Jehovah; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. <sup>7</sup>Who should not fear you, O King of the nations? Indeed, it is your due"* (Jer. 10:6-7a).

Bildad affirms the infinite power of God, he declares that God is the Commander of an innumerable host of warriors (25:3a.) He further affirms God's omnipresence and omniscience: *"upon whom does his light not rise?"* (25:3b.) Bildad now asserts that before the majestic God no man can be just or pure (25:4.) When God, the source and the very essence of moral purity, brings the holy light of His being to bear upon man, mortal man is exposed in his sin, all pretensions to human goodness and acceptability before God are done away. The prophet Isaiah experienced this truth when he had a personal encounter with the LORD:

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne—high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him stood the seraphs, each one having six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two wings they covered their feet, and with two wings they flew. <sup>3</sup>They were calling out to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory." ...<sup>5</sup>Then I declared, "Woe to me! I am ruined! —for I am a man with unclean lips and I live among a people with unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." (Isa. 6:1,3,5)*

Bildad reinforces his assertion by declaring that even the moon (in its full phase on a clear winter's night) has no brightness when compared to the brightness of

the majesty of God (25:5a,) and the stars (in all their blazing fire) are not pure when compared to the absolute purity of the Creator (25:5b.) This being the case, how much less bright and pure is mortal man, a mere worm? (25:6.)

Job responds to Bildad by sarcastically accusing him of providing worthless counsel (26:1-4.) Job acknowledges that he is without power, without strength, and without wisdom (26:2-3,) and charges that Bildad's counsel has not ministered to him. It has done nothing to help him and has made no contribution to the advancement of his spiritual knowledge.

The reason Bildad's teaching is of no value to Job is due to the fact that Job is already aware of the awesome majesty of God, Job is even more acquainted with the divine majesty than Bildad (26:5-14.) Not only does God's light shine upon all the inhabitants of the world (25:3b,) but, asserts Job, even the deep recesses of the ocean are known to God, indeed, even Sheol (the place of the dead) is naked before Him. Furthermore, even the deceased who lie beneath the waters, as well as the abundance of aquatic life, tremble before the all-seeing eyes of their Creator (26:5-6.)

In response to Bildad's mention of the moon and stars (25:5,) Job proclaims the wonders of God's creative ability (26:7-10.) God spreads out the northern skies over empty space (26:7)—God, like a sheikh pitching his tent, created the world (Hartley, p. 365.) God draws up the waters of the sea into the clouds by means of evaporation, yet the clouds do not burst apart under the weight of the vast quantity of water (26:8.) At the same time, God uses the cloud to conceal the heavenly bodies from man: *"He conceals the sight of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it"* (26:9.) God has set boundaries for the waters, as far as the distant horizon, so that they do not inundate the earth (26:10.) Not only does man, a mere mortal (25:6,) tremble before God, *"the pillars of the heavens quake, being astonished at his rebuke"* (26:11.)

God's infinite power and wisdom are revealed in His control of the sea: stirring it up (and quieting it down) at His command; subduing the great sea monster, *"Rahab"* (26:12)—*"Rahab"* is the embodiment of all evil forces (Hartley, p. 367.) Here, as in other passages of Old Testament Scripture, ancient Near Eastern mythological symbols (Rahab, Leviathan) are employed to depict God's sovereign power over all of creation and over all the forces and beings of evil.

God's infinite power and wisdom are also revealed in His control of the heavens: *"By his breath the skies become clear; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent"* (26:13.) Just as He clears away the clouds and causes His sunlight to shine upon the earth, so, too, God clears away evil from His presence and causes the brightness of His truth to shine forth. Note: God overcomes these [evil cosmic] foes by his power and by his insight ... Usually in ancient Near Eastern mythologies the god of wisdom is distinguished from the god of power. Because these two qualities do not exist in a single god of the pantheon, there is no god who is able to accomplish

his full intentions. In contrast, the God of Scripture possesses both qualities supremely. There is no other cosmic being that is his equal in any way (Hartley, p. 367.)

Job concludes his present argument by declaring that all he has just testified about God, with regard to His majestic wisdom and power, *“are [only] the outer fringe of his works; how faint is the whisper we hear of him!”* (26:14.)

Like Job and his companions, may we ever affirm the sovereign majesty of God—and, as Christians, may we take comfort in His sovereign majesty: *“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like the peals of thunder, shouting, ‘Hallelujah! for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns!’”* (Rev. 19:6.)

## II. Let Us Always Affirm the Ultimate Justice of God

Job now utters a solemn oath (27:1-2.) He swears by God Himself, who, Job maintains, *“has denied me justice”* (27:2a)—God has seen fit to deny Job his right: his right to enjoy the fellowship and blessing of God that his righteous life deserves. He swears by the Almighty, *“who has made my soul bitter”* (27:2b.) Job is charging that the Almighty—the One whom none can withstand—has exerted Himself against His servant Job, rather than exerting Himself on his behalf. Note: At the same time that he raises his complaint against God, Job confesses that God is presently preserving his life (27:3.) Here is a testimony to God’s faithfulness, He has not condemned Job to death (the ultimate fate of the wicked from which there is no reprieve, cp. 27:8;) here is evidence that God has not abandoned Job and will yet restore him to divine communion and bestow honor upon him. Job assures his companions that what he is about to utter is truth and righteousness: *“my lips will never bear false testimony, nor will my tongue utter deceit”* (27:4.)

Job’s solemn oath is nothing other than an affirmation of his righteousness (27:5-6.) He adamantly refuses to justify his companions by acknowledging any validity to their arguments and confessing to any alleged sin (27:5.) He cannot do so, for if he were to do so he would be denying his integrity: it would amount to the sin of false confession, falsely confessing and repenting of sin he has not committed. Job resolutely holds fast to his righteousness (27:6): his life of righteousness and his claim to righteousness (i.e.; innocence.) If he succumbed to his companions’ appeal for his “repentance,” he knows that his heart would reproach him for deceit and cowardly capitulation.

Job now proceeds to utter a curse against those who oppose him: *“May my enemy be like the wicked; [may] my adversary be like the unjust”* (27:7.) Job expresses the desire that those who unjustly oppose him would suffer the same fate as the wicked. Note: By uttering such words Job is expressing his confidence in the justice of God, his confidence that God shall surely execute judgment upon the wicked; and, conversely, bestow blessing upon the righteous. Indeed, Job now

goes on to expound upon the ultimate fate of the godless (27:8-10.) He inquires: *"What hope does the godless possess? Even though he may possess great wealth in this world, he possesses no hope when God takes away his life"* (27:8.) He goes on to ask, *"Will God hear the cry of the godless when distress [or, calamity, i.e.; the day of judgment] comes upon him?"* (27:9)—again Job expects the answer to be "No!" the godless have no hope and can expect no help from God on the Day of Judgment. God's refusal to hear his cry will be a fit and just response to the fact that the godless man, during his lifetime, took no delight in the Almighty and did not call upon God (27:10.)

Even as his companions have sought to instruct him, so now Job will teach them *"about God's power"* (27:11-23;) literally, he will teach them *"about the hand of God,"* i.e.; the works and the ways of God. Job asserts that what he is about to teach is actually common knowledge: *"Indeed, all of you have seen it"* (27:12a,) but his companions have lost sight of these things: *"Why, [then,] do you utter such worthless speech?"* (27:12b.) Here Job is speaking sarcastically, because what he is about to teach is the very thing his friends have been maintaining all along, namely, that God judges the ungodly—only the friends have been insisting that this just retribution occurs swiftly in this present world with few if any exceptions, rather than being reserved for a final day. Job now declares, *"This is the fate God allots to the wicked"* (27:13)—this is what a wicked man can expect to receive from God: *"if his children multiply in number, it is only that they may perish by the sword"* (27:14a)—a reference to death at the hands of an invading army or a plundering band of marauders, ordained by God as a judgment against the ungodly; *"his offspring will never have enough to eat"* (27:14b)—their fate will not be like the righteous, for whom the LORD shall provide in time of need: *"the eyes of Jehovah are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, <sup>19</sup>to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine"* (Psl. 33:18-19.)

Job goes on to further describe the final fate of the ungodly: his "survivors" shall in fact not survive him: *"the plague will bury those who survive him,"* and there shall be no mourning for them (27:15)—the wicked shall not perpetuate their name and their honor forever. The godless man may accumulate vast amounts of wealth (heaping up silver as though it were a huge pile of sand,) but ultimately it shall be the righteous and the innocent who shall inherit that wealth and come to enjoy it (27:16-17)—this is yet another testimony by Job concerning the ultimate justice of God. All that the godless man has built and all that he has viewed as his confidence is in fact transitory and perishable. The house he has built is like a spider's web: his house, constructed of cedar and stone, shall prove to be as flimsy as a spider's web (27:18.) *"He goes to bed wealthy, but for the last time; when he opens his eyes, he is gone"* (27:19)—he lies down to take his rest, confident in the security his riches afford; but when he opens his eyes, to his dismay he discovers that he has departed this world, leaving his wealth behind and realizing that it is of no value to him now. Indeed, terrors overwhelm him like a flood, sweeping him away in the darkness of the night (27:20-21.) All this

shall befall the godless man because God will cause the east wind to hurl itself against him *“without mercy as he tries to flee from its power”* (27:22.) God, on the appointed day of judgment, shall exercise righteous vengeance, and that without mercy. On that day of judgment *“men shall clap their hands at him [in derision]”* (27:23)—they shall applaud the fate of the ungodly; the righteous shall rejoice to see the justice of God executed against the godless and the wicked.

Thus Job, despite his present condition, affirms the ultimate justice of God—and, incidentally, he also affirms his own future vindication on that great day because of his steadfast faithfulness to God.

Let us, too, always affirm the ultimate justice of God—and let us take confidence in our final vindication as Christians by virtue of our union with the Lord Jesus Christ and our participation in His perfect righteousness:

*Then those who feared Jehovah talked with each other, and Jehovah listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared Jehovah and honored his name. <sup>17</sup>“They will be mine,” declares Jehovah of hosts, “in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. <sup>18</sup>And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.”* (Mal. 3:16-18)

### **III. Let Us Always Affirm that Wisdom Resides with God**

The opening verses of chapter 28 speak of human ability as displayed in man’s skill in the field of mining technology (28:1-11.) Men are able to extract such costly and valuable metals as silver, gold, iron, and copper from the earth (28:1-2.) With ingenuity and skill men are able to excavate deep within the dark recesses of the earth to discover and procure the precious metals (28:3-4.) *“Man puts an end to darkness;”* i.e.; by means of his torch, he lights the dark caverns of the earth as he searches for the hidden treasures of gold and other valuable metals.

In plummeting the depths of the earth, man is able to do something that cannot be done by any other of God’s creatures: neither any birds of prey nor any of the proud beasts can discover and extract the precious metals from the depths of the earth (28:7-8,) so superior is man’s God-given skill to that of the animals. 28:9-11 once again reiterate man’s ability to explore and to mine the depths of the earth, his ability to trace the sources of the rivers and bring hidden things to light.

But now the question is raised, *“Where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell?”* (28:12.) Although man possesses great skill and technical ability, he does not possess wisdom and understanding. Even though man has

plummeted the dark and hidden depths of the earth, he has not found wisdom and understanding: *“wisdom is not found in the land of the living”* (28:13.)

Indeed, neither is wisdom to be found in the depths of the sea (28:14.) The point is that wisdom is a mysterious, elusive commodity, much further out of human reach and removed from human accessibility than what lies in the dark recesses of the ocean floor. Wisdom cannot be purchased with any amount of gold, not only because it is inaccessible, but also because it is of far greater value than all the wealth of the world (28:15-19.) Neither the finest gold (*“the gold of Ophir”*) nor all the gems the world contains can be compared to wisdom in terms of ultimate value.

Given the inestimable value of wisdom, the question now arises, *“From where does wisdom come? Where is the dwelling place of understanding?”* (28:20.) It has already been established that wisdom is hidden from the eyes of every living thing; and even concealed from the birds of the sky (28:21)—the eagle, who soars high above the earth and with his keen eyesight is able to see all that lies below him, has not been able to detect wisdom. *“Abaddon”* (the realm of the dead) and Death itself testify, *“We have heard [only] a rumor as to the location of wisdom and its origin and where it is to be found”* (28:22.) This all indicates that wisdom is something that transcends this present sphere of life, something that has its origins in the realm beyond this present temporal existence—in the presence of God.

We are now informed that God understands the way to it; *“he knows where it dwells”* (28:23.) God knows where wisdom dwells; He has access to it and acquaintance with it because, as the Lord of all creation, nothing is hidden from Him (28:24.) Indeed, at the time of creation, *“when he established the force of the wind ... at that time he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he prepared it and examined it”* (28:25-27.) The language of verses 25-27 is reminiscent of Genesis 1:31, *“And God saw everything that he had made,”* thus indicating that wisdom originates from God—and He employed divine wisdom in the creation of the world. This mysterious entity of divine wisdom (Christ in His pre-incarnate state?) declares, *“when [the LORD] marked out the foundations of the earth. <sup>30</sup>At that time I was with him, as a master craftsman. I was filled with delight day after day, always rejoicing in his presence”* (Prov. 8:29c-30.)

God, who knows wisdom and who is the source of all wisdom, now Himself declares to man what is the essence of wisdom: *“Listen. The fear of the LORD is wisdom, and turning away from evil is understanding”* (28:28.) The essence of wisdom is to live a righteous life motivated by a holy reverence of God: *“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the [whole] duty of man”* (Eccl. 12:13.)

Let us always affirm that wisdom resides with God—*“in [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (Col. 2:3)—and that the essence of



wisdom is to lead a godly life with complete confidence in our Lord and heavenly Father.

## **Conclusion**

Here then are three great truths we must always affirm, even in the darkest and most tragic of times: 1) let us always affirm the sovereign majesty of God; 2) let us always affirm the ultimate justice of God; and 3) let us always affirm that wisdom resides with God. May we ever look to the LORD our God for the grace to steadfastly affirm these great truths and come to experience the reality of them with His blessing.