

I. The Glory of God

- A. Job 11:7-9 . . . Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? [8] They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? [9] Their measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.
- B. Isaiah 55:8-9 . . . “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. [9] “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- C. Daniel 2:20-22 . . . Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. [21] It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. [22] It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.
- D. Prayer

II. The glory of God is revealed through His wisdom

- A. Of the many parts or qualities of God, two seem more difficult than most others for our human minds to fully grasp – God having no beginning, wisdom.
 - 1. When it comes to no beginning, we have nothing beyond language to understand this reality, because everyone and everything we know about and have had experience with – apart from God – has a beginning. Therefore, though we can say the words, it is still hard for our minds to grasp something or someone having absolutely no beginning. Yet God has always been, just as He always will be – He has no beginning just as He has no end.
 - 2. In the same way, it is hard for us to grasp the extent, the magnitude, and the wealth of God's wisdom. Here again, we can use familiar language to describe it, we can point to scriptures that speak about it, and we can accept by faith that God's wisdom is greater than we can imagine, but that is about as far as we can go. Why? Because our knowledge and our wisdom, along with all earthly knowledge and wisdom, is limited and influenced by our humanity – and that includes the good parts and the bad parts of our humanity.

- B. Nevertheless, since God's wisdom is part of what makes up His glory, it is worth the effort to try – as best we can – to see it and understand it for what it is.
1. Therefore, I want to begin by showing you what the scripture says about God's wisdom being immeasurably greater than our wisdom.
 - a. Psalm 147:5 . . . Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.
 - (1) God has infinite understanding. This means that God's inherent intellectual power has no limits, which in turn means He is able to understand anything and everything.
 - (2) Now you may be wondering what understanding has to do with wisdom. The answer is simple – wisdom is built on our understanding of the knowledge we have. Therefore, since God's understanding is infinite, His wisdom is infinite.
 - b. Isaiah 40:28 . . . Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.
 - (1) When Isaiah says God's understanding is inscrutable, what he means is that God's understanding is so vast and comprehensive that it is beyond our ability to measure or comprehend or fully explain.
 - (2) And here again, since wisdom is built on understanding, and since God's understanding is inscrutable, His wisdom is inscrutable.
 - c. Romans 11:33 . . . Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!
 - (1) The first thing I want to point out is that this scripture ties wisdom and knowledge together – which is an important link because knowledge is the basis of understanding and understanding is the basis of wisdom.
 - (2) But Paul says something else that is important. He tells us that God's wisdom and knowledge are not sitting in a book on the shelf, but rather they are active – that is, actively involved in His judgments and ways. And since His wisdom and knowledge are deeply rich, they make His judgments and ways unsearchable and unfathomable.
 - d. The point here is simple. Scripture clearly states that God's wisdom is far beyond our human understanding and even further beyond our wisdom.

2. Now that we have looked at scripture concerning the extent of God's wisdom, I want to turn to the book of James and look at the words he uses to more precisely define God's wisdom. James 3:17 . . . But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.
 - a. First, God's wisdom is pure.
 - (1) In other words, before God's wisdom is anything else, it is free of everything and anything that might in any way dilute it or pollute it so as to degrade its quality or pervert its intended purpose or prevent it from accomplishing what is righteous and good.
 - (2) To put this in the negative, the purity of God's wisdom means it is free of such evils as craftiness, deceitful cunning, the use of tricks to deceive, duplicity, and treachery.
 - (3) Do you see how this makes God's wisdom trustworthy?
 - b. Then, God's wisdom is peaceable. This means that God's wisdom is directed toward making peace, promoting peace, and keeping the peace.
 - (1) We see this aspect of God's wisdom in what He has done to reconcile us to Himself, what He has done to make possible meaningful relationship between Himself and us, and – if we submit to His word and will – what He has taught us about being at peace with those around us.
 - (2) Do you see how immensely valuable this makes God's wisdom? God does not want fighting or discord or damaged and broken relationships. Rather, He wants peace – between Himself and His creation, and within His creation.
 - c. Next, God's wisdom is gentle – which means it is forbearing, patient, long-suffering, and tender. But it goes beyond that, for the gentleness of God's wisdom promotes self-sacrifice for the greater good of others.
 - (1) Do you see from this that God's grace is as much a product of His wisdom as of His love and mercy? We can rightly say that in His wisdom, He chose to be gracious toward sinful humanity. And from that same wisdom came the means He chose of making His grace available to us.
 - (2) A scripture example of this wisdom driven grace comes from Romans 2:4, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of God's kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the

kindness of God leads us to repentance.” This kindness comes as much from God’s wisdom as from His love.

- d. Moving on, James says that God’s wisdom is reasonable. This means that God’s wisdom is sensible in a fair-minded way in its dealings with us. In other words, the reasonableness of God’s wisdom is one of the reasons He deals with us according to our humanity.

- (1) As David wrote in Psalm 103:10-14 . . . “God has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. [11] For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. [12] As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. [13] Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. [14] For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.”

- (2) In addition, the reasonableness of God’s wisdom means He is open to being reasoned with – that is, to listening to our views about a particular situation or relationship and giving due consideration to our requests or hopes or fears as a result.

- (3) I don’t want to make too much of this, but James follows gentleness with reasonableness. Could it be that these two aspects of God’s wisdom work together to promote grace – as God does what is necessary to reconcile us to Himself, and patience – when we are trying to get Him to see things our way? It is something to consider.

- e. Next, God’s wisdom is full of mercy – mercy toward the sinner, the less fortunate, the discouraged and hopeless, and those being taken advantage of or abused by a superior power. In other words, wisdom that is full of mercy is wisdom that is full of pity and compassion.

- (1) The Old Testament speaks of this when it makes it clear that God has a vigilant regard for the widows and the orphans (Deuteronomy 10:18; 27:19).

- (2) In the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews helps us understand this truth when he says that [Christ was] made like [us] in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17).

- f. In addition to being full of mercy, God’s wisdom is full of good fruits. This should encourage us, because it means that God not only has good intentions, His wisdom figures out ways to turn His good intentions into reality.
 - (1) Or to say it another way, God’s wisdom is active in such a way as to produce a whole variety of good results.
 - (2) Paul says the same thing when he says “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).
 - g. James continues describing God’s wisdom by saying it is unwavering. When we say God’s wisdom is unwavering, we mean it is faithful, steady, consistent, single-minded, single-motivated, and without any double-standards.
 - (1) Remember where this list began? James said God’s wisdom is first of all, pure.
 - (2) And what we see here is the purity of God’s wisdom demonstrated through the unwavering ways God’s deals with us. In other words, this is purity of wisdom affecting the practice of wisdom – which is another reason to trust in God’s wisdom.
 - h. Finally, James says that God’s wisdom is without hypocrisy. This is a testimony to God’s character, because hypocrisy is not an accident, it is deliberate. In order for hypocrisy to be in anything, it must be brought into it by someone wanting to be a hypocrite. But because God is no hypocrite, His wisdom is free of hypocrisy.
 - (1) A positive way of saying “without hypocrisy” is to say God’s wisdom is sincere – that is, without questionable or intentionally selfish or evil motives.
 - (2) Therefore, this final quality of God’s wisdom is an affirmation that His wisdom is as holy and pure as His character. Which is another reason why we are wise to trust in God’s wisdom.
- C. I hope you are beginning to see why God’s wisdom is part of what makes Him glorious. And though we are limited in grasping the full measure of His wisdom, God shows us His wisdom in a variety of ways, and shares His wisdom with those who ask. For example –
1. God displays His wisdom in the works of creation. Psalm 104:24 . . . O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your possessions.

2. God displays His wisdom in the birth, life, and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 . . . But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."
3. God displays His wisdom in the church. Ephesians 3:8-11 . . . To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.
4. And God gives wisdom to those who seek it in humble faith. James 1:5-8 . . . But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (Note: Proverbs 2:3-7)

D. In James 1:5-8, we read that when we ask for wisdom, we must ask in faith – without doubting. This reminds us of the vital connection between God’s wisdom and our faith. For example –

1. In order to accept as truth the scriptures we’ve read describing the extent of God’s wisdom, the various characteristics of God’s wisdom, and the various displays of God’s wisdom, we must accept them as being true, by faith.
2. If we are to ask for wisdom from God, we must accept, by faith, that the wisdom He gives actually comes from Him and is divinely wise.
3. And if we are to rely on God’s wisdom, so as to trust in what God does, what He allows, what He works out, and what He says about how we are to live, we must rely on it by faith.
4. Which raises the question: “Why is faith required for accepting and living according to God’s wisdom?”
 - a. I believe the answer is this – God’s wisdom, at times, seems unwise when viewed through the eyes of our accumulated earthly knowledge, our accumulated earthly experiences, and whatever measure of earthly wisdom we’ve gained over the years.

- b. In other words, it is not always easy for human eyes to see the wisdom in God's wisdom. Therefore, if we are to trust that God is exceedingly wise, that His wisdom is always exceeding good, and that the outcome of His wisdom is always beyond reproach, and if we are to live according to His wisdom – as we ought, we must believe in God and His wisdom – and this requires faith.

III. In conclusion

- A. I want to conclude our study today with a reading from Job.
- B. Job 28:12-28 . . . But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? [13] Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living. [14] The deep says, 'It is not in me'; and the sea says, 'It is not with me.' [15] Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, nor can silver be weighed as its price. [16] It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx, or sapphire. [17] Gold or glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold. [18] Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; and the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls. [19] The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. [20] Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding? [21] Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the sky. [22] Abaddon and Death say, 'With our ears we have heard a report of it.' [23] God understands its way, and He knows its place. [24] For He looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. [25] When He imparted weight to the wind and meted out the waters by measure, [26] when He set a limit for the rain and a course for the thunderbolt, [27] then He saw [wisdom] and declared it; He established [wisdom] and also searched it out. [28] And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding'.