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Week 9

OT 645

Wisdom

Wisdom was a gift from God that Job desired in his moment of anguish. In the book of Job, the main character, Job was a pious man who remained faithful to God despite a period of intense suffering. Job's friends accused Job of sin and they tried to convince Job to repent. However, Job maintained his innocence and he continued to trust God. Job knew that he needed spiritual guidance in his moment of suffering so he turned to the Lord to seek wisdom. Job believed God's guidance will give him the knowledge and awareness that he needed to triumph in his period of trials and suffering. Crenshaw described wisdom as an elusive commodity that is difficult to find and maintain. Wisdom is something precious that cannot be bought or sold as a commodity. It was believed wisdom was only obtained from God. Job 28:28 states "The fear of the Lord is wisdom! To stay away from evil is understanding." Therefore, Job made a conscious effort to seek God for wisdom, he refrains from evil behavior, and he maintains his religious belief as he pursued his goal to attain wisdom from God.

According to Janzen, Job realized wisdom comes from God so he had a time of prayer and meditation after his encounter with his friends. Job desired wisdom to connect with God and to regain a sense of clarity to cope with his challenging situation. Geller suggests wisdom is more significant than any precious metal or a priceless piece of jewelry. Geller appears to make a comparison between wisdom and precious jewelry because wisdom was rare and it was

necessary to seek God in an attempt to gain wisdom. Geller compared wisdom to mining for the precious metal. Geller indicated that the miner is required to dig deep into the earth to search for the precious metal similarly a person seeking wisdom is required to pray, meditate, and seek God to gain wisdom. Geller proposed that the person who seeks wisdom and understanding should be aware of possible challenging situations that may occur before one can attain knowledge and wisdom. Geller indicated that the miner is required to process and refine the metal before it becomes beautiful and shines so the consumer can have an appreciation for it. Similarly, a person may have to endure a rigorous psychological and spiritual process before the person can develop an adequate appreciation for the gift of wisdom. Geller suggests God is the source of wisdom because it existed before the beginning and God used wisdom to create the earth. In contrast, humans do not automatically develop wisdom and they may not be aware of the origin of wisdom. According to Geller, humans do not understand what is divine wisdom and it is challenging for a person to automatically comprehend the things of God including challenging life lessons.

Geller suggests divine providence is God's way of demonstrating his care and protection for humans. Therefore, God in his supreme wisdom can demonstrate care for plants by providing rain and food for animals as well as providing for the needs of his children as a sign of his goodness. Geller indicated that the presence of rain was a sign of God's covenant and his care towards Israel. Job was aware that his challenging life experience was a season and God was going to give him the wisdom to be victorious as he went through the trying period. Geller suggested that the question of theodicy was a relevant theological idea to consider as one examines how does a good God allow his children to experience such intense suffering. The theme of order and chaos was also a common idea in the book of Job. Job's friends aimed to

support him but their conversation focused on Job's friends accusing him of sin and the need to repent. Job was confident in his devout desire to be faithful to God.

Job did not allow his friend's accusation to affect his relationship with God. Job was confident that he would be vindicated after this challenging period. Job's reflection and meditation was a time for Job to develop the wisdom he needed to cope with his period of suffering.

Reference

Crenshaw, J. Reading Job (Smyth & Helwys,). Reading Job: A Literary and Theological Commentary (Reading the Old Testament), 2011

Geller, "Where is Wisdom" (handout)

Janzen, Gerald. Job: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 2012