

Theme: True wisdom is humble, knowing its own limits, and trusting in the limitless wisdom of God.

I. Intro – Limits of wisdom in LOTR

- A. Discussion between Frodo and Gandalf
- B. Frodo wishes Bilbo killed Gollum
- C. Gandalf's great quote – limits of wisdom
- D. Job also wishes things had gone differently
- E. How does wisdom respond to great suffering?
- F. What are the limitations of wisdom?

II. The Structure of Job

- A. Prose prologue – Job 1-2
- B. Poetic dialogue – Job 3 – 42:6
 - 1. Job and three friends – 3 cycles (3-27)
 - 2. Hymn to wisdom – 28
 - 3. Job's final speech – 29-31
 - 4. Elihu's interruption – 32-37
 - 5. God's speech and Job's response – 38-42:6
- C. Prose epilogue – Job 42:7-17

III. The Three Friends & Job

- A. Their friendship & initial sympathy (2:11-13)
- B. Job's lament (3:1-4; 11-12)
- C. The theology of Job's friends
 - 1. The friends & Proverbs (18:5/ Pr 13:9; 4:8/Pr 22:8)
 - 2. Distortion - retribution theology (5:3-6, 27; 8:4; 22:4-11)
 - 3. Retribution – cause & effect reversed; mechanical; cruel
 - 4. Retribution theology common – John 9:1-3
- D. Job's theology, his problem, his desire
 - 1. Job's lousy comforters - 16:1-5
 - 2. Job's theology - 27:13-21
 - 3. Job's problem – 27:2-6; 21:17-18
 - 4. Job's desire – 13:20-24

IV. God's Response To Job

- A. An awesome answer from a storm (38:1-3)
- B. A question of knowledge/wisdom – Job 38-39
 - 1. Questions - Job 38:4-5; 38:19-21
 - 2. Conclusion – 40:1-5
- C. A question of power – Job 40-41

1. Questions – Behemoth & Leviathan; 41:1, 10-11
2. Conclusion – 42:1-6

V. Applying the Word

A. Do we see the personal nature of wisdom?

1. Do we have a mechanistic view of the universe?
2. What is sovereign – laws, faith – or God?
3. Do we see suffering can be part of God's will? (1 Peter 4:19)

B. Do we see the humble nature of wisdom?

1. Do we see the limitations of our own wisdom?
2. Do we see the limitations of our own power?
3. Do we see the unlimited nature of God's wisdom?
4. Do we see the unlimited nature of God's power?

C. Do we see the trusting nature of wisdom? (1 Pet 4:19)

1. Do we trust God – even when we don't understand?
2. God moves – William Cowper & Bob Kauflin

Job - Part 2 - Wisdom in the Face of Suffering

Job 3-42 (1 Peter 4:19)

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How Great is Our God OR Better By Far

Jude 24-25

The lamp of the wicked is snuffed out; the flame of his fire stops burning.
Job 18:5

The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.
Proverbs 13:9

As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.
Job 4:8

He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.
Proverbs 22:8

I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his house was cursed. 4 His children are far from safety, crushed in court without a defender. 5 The hungry consume his harvest, taking it even from among thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth. 6 For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground.... 27 "We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself." Job 5:3-6, 27

When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin. Job 8:4

"Is it for your piety that he rebukes you and brings charges against you? 5 Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless? 6 You demanded security from your brothers for no reason; you stripped men of their clothing, leaving them naked. 7 You gave no water to the weary and you withheld food from the hungry, 8 though you were a powerful man, owning land-- an honored man, living on it. 9 And you sent widows away empty-handed and broke the strength of the fatherless. 10 That is why snares are all around you, why sudden peril terrifies you, 11 why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you. 22:2-11

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. John 9:1-3

Then Job replied: 2 "I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all! 3 Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing? 4 I also could speak like you, if you were in my place; I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you. 5 But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief. Job 16:1-5

13 "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. 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. 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.

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. Job 27:13-21

"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. 5 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. Job 27:2-6

Yet how often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out? How often does calamity come upon them, the fate God allots in his anger? 18 How often are they like straw before the wind, like chaff swept away by a gale? 21:17-18

Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: 21 Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors. 22 Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply. 23 How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin. 24 Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy? Job 13:20-24

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: 2 "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me." Job 38:1-3

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? Job 38:4-5

What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? 20 Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? 21 Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years! Job 38:19-21

The LORD said to Job: 2 "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" 3 Then Job answered the LORD: 4 "I am unworthy-- how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. 5 I spoke once, but I have no answer-- twice, but I will say no more." Job 40:1-5

"Can you pull in the leviathan with a fishhook or tie down his tongue with a rope?... 10 No one is fierce enough to rouse him. Who then is able to stand against me? 11 Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me. Job 41:1, 10-11

Then Job replied to the LORD: 2 "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. 3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. 4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' 5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:1-6

Frodo - "It's a pity Bilbo didn't kill him when he had the chance."

Gandalf - " Pity? It was pity that stayed Bilbo's hand. Many that live deserve death, and some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them, Frodo? Do not be too eager to deal out death in judgment. Even the very wise cannot see all ends. My heart tells me that Gollum has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before this is over. The pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many." - Gandalf, LOTR