

- I. The Wisdom of God Part 1: Old Testament
- a. Purpose: In this session we shall see what the Old Testament teaches about the wisdom of God as an attribute of God so that we can draw implications for our lives.
  - b. Definition of the Wisdom of God:
    - i. Wayne Grudem: “God’s wisdom means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals.”<sup>1</sup>
    - ii. John Feinberg: “Divine wisdom is an aspect of divine omniscience, but it is not identical with it. Wisdom involves more than merely having all facts at one’s disposal. It also involves knowing how to use those facts to accomplish ends in the best way.”<sup>2</sup>
  - c. The Wisdom of God is distinct from the knowledge and truth of God
    - i. After defining the wisdom of God, Wayne Grudem states “This definition goes beyond the idea of God knowing all things and specifies that God’s decisions about what he will do are always wise decisions: that is, they always will bring about the best results (from God’s ultimate perspective), and they will bring about those results through the best possible means.”<sup>3</sup>
    - ii. One way we can see the distinction between knowledge and wisdom is in the examples of human beings.
      1. Some people can be very knowledgeable but not wise.
      2. Still others can be very wise without being the most knowledgeable.
      3. However with God we must remember that He is both omniscient in His knowledge and also the all-wise God.<sup>4</sup>
    - iii. While we can make distinction between the wisdom of God and the knowledge of God (omniscience), John Frame also have this wise caution: “And when we consider wisdom as a divine attribute, we should not separate it sharply from other divine attributes, such as knowledge.”<sup>5</sup>
  - d. Biblical Teaching on the Wisdom of God
    - i. “*Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm?*” (Job 9:4)
      1. Context: Here Job is responding to his friend Bildad and Job here is describing God.
      2. Note the verse states about God that He is “*Wise in heart.*”
        - a. “Heart” is functioning anthropomorphically just as when we seen in previous lessons about the arms of the Lord, the eyes of the Lord, etc.
        - b. “Heart” in Hebrew thought is the center of the person’s inner life of thought.
        - c. Thus we extrapolate from this verse that God’s very inner being is wise.

<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 193.

<sup>2</sup> John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 253.

<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 193.

<sup>4</sup> John Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 253.

<sup>5</sup> John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2002), 506.

3. Earlier in **verse 3** Job made the point that no one can win in arguing against God and here we see why: It is because God is wise.
  4. Job was probably the first book written in the Bible and is amazing that early on the belief that God is wise is believed.
- ii. God created the world in wisdom
1. Note: Notice that the wisdom of God is inter-related with other attributes of God and not just only with omniscience. Here we see God's wisdom inter-related with God as Creator.
  2. *"O Lord, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; The earth is full of Your possessions."* (**Psalm 104:24**)
    - a. Context: **Psalm 104** is a Creation Psalm in which the author describes God's care for His creation.
    - b. The first line of this verse acknowledge the multitude of things that are created by God: *"O Lord, how many are Your works"*
    - c. The third line confesses that everything on earth is owned by God: *"The earth is full of Your possessions."*
    - d. But notice the second line: *"In wisdom You have made them all"* → This verse acknowledges that God's creation was done according to the Wisdom of God.
  3. This truth is affirmed in Proverbs: *"The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, By understanding He established the heavens."* (**Proverbs 3:19**)
    - a. Remember Proverbs is a book about wisdom of God for man. Thus the whole book demonstrates the wisdom of God.
    - b. When we read *"The Lord by wisdom founded the earth,"* (**v.19a**) we are not surprised that in Proverbs we would find a passage about God creating according to the Wisdom of God.
    - c. Note that while **Psalm 104:24** mentioned God created the earth all it contains through His wisdom here the wisdom of God displayed in God's creation expands to the heavens: *"By understanding He established the heavens"* (**v.19b**)
  4. *"To Him who made the heavens with skill, For His lovingkindness is everlasting;"* (**Psalm 136:5**)
    - a. Here we see the teaching that God *"made the heavens with skill."*
    - b. Recall that the definition of wisdom involves being skillful and applying knowledge.
    - c. Thus this verse establishes that God is wise and displayed His wisdom in creating the heavens.
  5. Both **Jeremiah 10:12** and **Jeremiah 51:15** stating the same thing: *"It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world*

*by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.”*

- iii. Historical Narratives in the Old Testament of God giving wisdom to humans
  1. Point: If God gives wisdom to people that presupposes He has wisdom to give them and is thus a wise God.
  2. God giving wisdom to skillful craftsmen
    - a. *“You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me.”* (Exodus 28:3)
      - i. Context: Exodus 28 describes God’s requirement for the garments of the priest after the Hebrews were freed from Egypt.
      - ii. Note that God wants Moses to address *“all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom,”* thus showing that their skill is the result of God giving them the Spirit of Wisdom.
    - b. Other passages: Exodus 31:3, 31:6, 35:31, 36:1-2.
  3. God giving wisdom to rulers
    - a. *“Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.”* (Deuteronomy 34:9)
      - i. Context: This is the next generation leader after Moses and here we see Joshua was filled with the Spirit of Wisdom that was imparted to Him through Moses.
    - b. Other passages: 1 Kings 3:12, 1 Kings 3:28, 1 Kings 5:12 Daniel 1:17 and Ezra 7:25.
      - i. All these passages demonstrate that God gave to the rulers of His people wisdom over a large time span from the time the Hebrews were about to enter the Promise Land, in Solomon’s era, during the Exile and even during the Post-exilic era.
      - ii. This demonstrates God’s graciousness with dispensing wisdom.
  4. God giving wisdom to Prophets
    - a. *““It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.”* (Daniel 2:22)
      - i. Context: Daniel here is praising God after it was revealed to Him by God the interpretation of the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar.
      - ii. Here Daniel is making a profession about God revealing mysteries.

- iii. It is in in a context that talks heavily about wisdom (v.20-21, 23)
  - b. If wisdom involves unfolding mysteries of course the many prophets in Scripture are instances of God giving wisdom to them.
- iv. *“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.” (Daniel 2:20-21)*
  - 1. Context: Again it is Daniel praising God after it was revealed to Him by God the interpretation of the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar.
  - 2. In **verse 20** Daniel praises God for being the source of wisdom: *“For wisdom and power belong to Him”*
  - 3. In **verse 21** Daniel praises God for granting wisdom to humans: *“He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.”*
- e. Implications
  - i. We must believe that God is wise!
    - 1. That means we live according to His way, not our way.
    - 2. That means we believe how the Bible describes the world and God rather than how the world describes the world or God.
  - ii. Value wisdom from God more precious than gold or silver (**Proverbs 16:16**)!
  - iii. Do you want to seek wisdom from God?
    - 1. First step is to fear Him (**Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Psalm 11:10**)!
    - 2. Do you pray to God for wisdom?
    - 3. Do you study God’s Word for wisdom?
      - a. Practically, do you read Proverbs?
      - b. But not just Proverbs, do you study His law?
      - c. Do you study the Prophets knowing that it puts everything in perspective with history, life, the end times, etc?
  - iv. Don’t forget that wisdom has a moral dimension (**Proverbs 4:11**).<sup>6</sup> Therefore are you living righteously as motivated by God’s grace?

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<sup>6</sup> John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2002), 506.