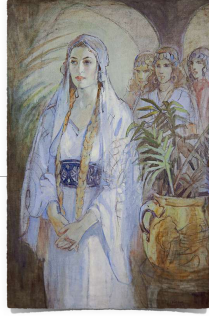


## THE WISDOM OF GOD

Ancient Sagacity from the Book of Proverbs



## WISDOM AND JESUS

- **Matthew 12:42** *The queen of Sheba will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen.*
- **Luke 7:35** *But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it. (or “by all her children”)*
- **I Corinthians 1:30-31** *For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. (Wisdom incarnate)*
- **Colossians 2:3** *In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (as Creator and Redeemer)*

- In light of these tie-ins, what do we do with the Wisdom Literature, and particularly of the Book of Proverbs?
- Where is the Gospel in Proverbs? (Gospel-centered?)
  - How can wisdom literature be understood so as not to have a *reversion* into some kind of moralism?
  - Old Testament wisdom literature is still God's wisdom, yet it is enhanced and made more profound by the work of Jesus Messiah.

## SOME BIG PICTURE STUFF

- Contrary to common impressions, Proverbs is not merely a hodgepodge of moralisms, but an highly *imaginative* literature.
  - It isn't primarily a set of moral laws that are to be mastered, but rather a mosaic of concrete pictures *to cultivate a way of thinking, orientation, sensibilities*, creating an atmosphere of *maturing* wisdom of the heart.
- It paints a picture of a *holistic* view of life.
- The primary character is *Wisdom*, personified as a woman both in the first 9 chapters (which informs the rest of the book, especially the last chapter).

- Wisdom's connection with *creation*
  - More about observing nature and drawing lessons and less like wanting to teach a lesson and finding an illustration.
- Wisdom's *primary goal*
  - To shape the human soul in Truth, Beauty, and Goodness
- Wisdom is love lived out toward God, humanity, and creation.
- Wisdom's approach is to get us to fall in love by *enticing our desires, moving our will, and enchanting our emotions.*

## AUTHORSHIP

<sup>1</sup> *These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel.*

- **I Kings 4:29-34**
- Given that the primary authorship is attributed to Solomon, it is surprising that there is little or no reference to:
  - Temple worship/sacrifices
  - Israel's history
  - References to the Law
- Other contributors: advisors of King Hezekiah (25), Agur (30), King Lemuel, Lemuel's mother.

<sup>2</sup> *Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise.*

<sup>3</sup> *Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is **right, just, and fair.***

<sup>4</sup> *These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the to the young.*

<sup>5</sup> *Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance*

<sup>6</sup> *by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the words of the wise and their riddles.*

- Those who can benefit range from the simple to the wise, from the young to the old.
- We are alerted that this will only come through mental attentiveness and work.

<sup>7</sup> **Fear of the Lord** is the foundation of true knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

- Heb. “yirah” and “YHWH”
- Not the repulsive fear of Mt. Sinai, but shock and awe which leads to wonder and exploration.
- An awakened appetite to know more of the mystery, while understanding there is always more (i.e. increased comprehension, but never mastery).
- A passion to know what is true, and Him who is true through discipline and engagement in *creation* and human *community*.

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## WILL YOU RECEIVE THE INVITATION?

- An invitation to a love affair with Wisdom
- And invitation to explore the Divine Wonder of the mysteries of creation and human relationships
- An invitation, enhanced by the Good News of Jesus Messiah as Creator of all, God of all providence, and Redeemer of the world
- If so, then come and sit at her banquet table and feast!

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