

Proverbs Lesson 8

Proverbs Chapter 8

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Introduction: In chapters 8 and 9, a new and short section of the book commences portraying the virtues of wisdom. In Proverbs chapter 8, Solomon describes wisdom again as a personality and how this personality is characterized by righteousness. Once again, the greater personification of wisdom is found in Christ which is made clear throughout this chapter.

I. The Blessings of Wisdom

Pro 8:1 Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

Pro 8:2 She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

Pro 8:3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

Once again, wisdom is described as a person. The thought closely parallels that of Proverbs 1:20. Again, understanding is described as one and the same with wisdom. They are both related and interconnected. Because the Hebrew nouns (wisdom and understanding) are feminine in gender, the two are referred to in the feminine gender. However, that identification is only grammatical. The greater personality is that of Christ.

Pro 1:20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

Pro 1:21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

Pro 1:22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

Pro 1:23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

As in Proverbs 1:20 ff, wisdom is described as standing atop the hills of Jerusalem and along the streets thereof. She is described as standing at the gates of the city, crying out for men to hear her voice. The idea is how that throughout the holy city of Jerusalem, wisdom cried out for men to hear her voice. That call echos across the ages to this day.

Because of the Temple and the influence of the written Word of God at Jerusalem, the quiet call of wisdom was throughout the city. It may be that Scripture was inscribed upon important buildings, intersections, and gates throughout the city.

The point is that godly wisdom was evident to any who would pay heed at Jerusalem—likely from Scripture and godly men of the city. However, what is even more evident is the call of wisdom for men to pay heed thereto.

Pro 8:4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

Pro 8:5 O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

The call is made clear here. The appeal from wisdom is not just to the men of Jerusalem, but to all men. The word translated as simple (ytp pethiy) essentially has the sense of being ‘naive.’ The mention of fools refers to those who are willfully unwise and irresponsible. The modern slang word ‘jerk’ is not far from the idea. The greater point is that wisdom calls out to all men to pay heed—especially those who are naive, irresponsible, and foolish.

Pro 8:6 Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

Pro 8:7 For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Pro 8:8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

Pro 8:9 They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

Insight into the characteristics of wisdom are provided. The word translated as excellent things (dygn nagiyd) has the sense of ‘high class’ or ‘regal’ things. The point is that wisdom is not found in base, coarse, crude, or vulgar comments. It is high and lofty. It is elegant and high class. Moreover, the voice of wisdom speaks righteously.

As the chapter develops, a close relationship between righteousness and wisdom will be seen as the two are virtually synonymous. Another characteristic of wisdom is that of truth. Wisdom is honest and not deceitful. The word translated as wickedness (evr resha’) in this context refers to that which is unethical. Wisdom is honest and abhors that which is unethical.

Again, there is a direct correlation between wisdom and righteousness. In verse 6, the word translated as right things (rvym meishar) refers to practical righteousness—the outworking of right. The word translated here as righteousness (qdu tsedeg) is the Hebrew word for righteousness as a principle. To do that which is right is to do that which is wise. Or conversely, to do that which is wise is to do that which is right.

Here, the specific context is of what we say. Wise advice or comments will embrace the principle of righteousness. There is nothing “froward or perverse” in wise comments. The latter thought is how that there is nothing crooked or

untoward in true wisdom. The subject is the words of wisdom spoken of in the preceding verse.

The word translated as plain (xkn nakoach) has the sense of 'straight' (in contrast to crooked) or 'upright.' Wisdom is straight and not devious. Those who have understanding recognize it. Those who are knowledgeable realize the uprightness of wisdom. Throughout this section, there is a close correlation between that which is right, honest, and straight with wisdom. True wisdom is characterized by all of these.

Pro 8:10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

Pro 8:11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Wisdom therefore cries out for men to receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. The implicit thought is of reproof or rebuke. Wisdom will often cut across the grain of habits of life and rebuke us thereby. The word translated as instruction (rowm muwcar) has the sense of 'discipline,' 'chastening,' or 'correction.'

Furthermore, wisdom cries out for mankind to receive such corrective wisdom rather than the pursuit of wealth. Wisdom and wealth are not necessarily exclusive, but wise counsel is to pursue wisdom rather than the pursuit of wealth. Wisdom is far more valuable than precious stones. In fact, wisdom is more valuable than all other things. There is no comparison between the value of wisdom and the value of things.

II. Wisdom Leads to Fear of the Lord

Pro 8:12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

Pro 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Pro 8:14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

In the next ten verses, wisdom (personified) describes further attributes which she possesses. Wisdom is prudent and judicious. They all occupy the same address. The word translated as witty inventions (hmzm mazimmah) in this context has the sense of 'discretion.' The greater thought is how that wisdom is not only prudent, but discreet. Absent from wisdom is a loose tongue.

Though not explicitly stated, clearly implied is that wisdom is coupled with the fear of the Lord. They coexist together. Therefore, wisdom hates evil even as the

fear of the Lord does the same. One clear attribute of the fear of the Lord is described. Wisdom hates pride, arrogance, and evil ways. It further abhors a smart mouth. Clearly implied is that none of the above resides in wisdom.

As we would seek to develop wisdom in our lives, it is clear that we must get rid of arrogance, evil ways, and a smart mouth. They all are enemies of godly wisdom. Wisdom receives advice and is efficient. A wise man will receive advice from others. See Proverbs 10:8. Fools bristle when they receive criticism.

Pro 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

The word translated as sound wisdom (hyvwt tuwshiyah) has the sense of 'efficient' or 'successful.' The idea is how that wisdom not only receives advice but is efficient and successful as a consequence. As a result, wisdom understands problems and therefore has great strength of position in life.

Pro 8:15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Pro 8:16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Though the thought is advancing to the personification of wisdom in Christ, the immediate application is quite straightforward and practical. Wisdom enables those in places of high rank to lead effectively. The latter phrase has the idea how by wisdom princes make righteous decrees. The word translated as justice {qdu tsedek} is a basic Hebrew word for 'righteousness.' In a broader scope, the thought is how that wisdom leads to right decisions. That, by the way, is what keeps those in leadership in office.

Wisdom enables those in various levels of authority to remain in office. A wise leader usually has a long tenure. Foolish ones are soon removed from office.

III. Those That Love God Will Find Him

Pro 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." The personality speaking clearly is that of wisdom personified. (See verse 12.) As the succeeding context will clearly develop, the ultimate personality at hand is that of Jesus Christ. He is wisdom personified. But, for the moment the immediate application is primarily of wisdom.

The thought is how that those who love and seek after wisdom will find it. Moreover, those who seek out wisdom early (whether early in life, early in the day, or early in a crucial decision etc.) will find it. God grants wisdom to those who seek godly wisdom. See James 1:5. When God perceives one truly searching for divine wisdom, He has promised to so grant it.

Jas 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Pro 8:18 Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

Pro 8:19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

A wonderful thing about godly wisdom is that it eventually brings true prosperity and honor. The wealth produced by wisdom (though not necessarily monetary in nature) is enduring and it is right. In short, wisdom will produce true and long-lasting prosperity that is grounded in that which is right. The wealth of the world is often elusive and rests upon an unrighteous foundation. It comes with trouble and often evaporates quickly.

The wealth of wisdom is better than vast amounts of money. For, with godly wisdom comes peace, tranquility, and genuine happiness. The wealth of the world usually is devoid of all of those.

Pro 8:20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

Pro 8:21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

Again, the virtually synonymous relationship between wisdom and righteousness is made clear. Wisdom walks in the paths of righteousness and as is translated in the Authorized Version, leads therein. Furthermore, wisdom leads in making right decisions. The word translated as lead (Klh halak) in its most common sense means to 'go' or to 'walk.'

The word translated as judgment {jpvm mishpat} in this context essentially means 'right decisions.' Once again, the greater thought is how that true godly wisdom will, in the long run, produce material prosperity. The word translated as treasures (uwa 'owtsar) literally means 'treasuries.' In modern manner of speaking, it would approximate the idea of a 'bank account.' Godly wisdom is practical and ultimately productive.

Pro 8:22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

Pro 8:23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

From here to the end of the chapter the personification of wisdom becomes evident in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate personification thereof. The clear foreshadow is of Christ. However, the immediate application is that of

wisdom. The thought at hand is how that Jehovah God had wisdom before His creative works.

The point is that wisdom guided God throughout His creative work. The personification thereof was our Lord, Jesus Christ. Wisdom was anointed by God in eternity past, before the creation began. Some teach this does not refer to the Anointed One, Jesus Christ, and His anointing by His heavenly Father in eternity past. It undoubtedly does! From the beginning of time, our Lord has always been anointed by God. (The words Messiah and Christ both mean 'the anointed one.')

Pro 8:24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

Pro 8:25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

Pro 8:26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

The immediate application is how that before the creation began, wisdom was present with God. The broader truth is of the eternality and preexistence of Christ. When the beginning began, He already was. See John 1:1-3.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

The thought is not of the origins of Christ, but rather of His eternality.

Pro 8:27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

Pro 8:28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

Pro 8:29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

Pro 8:30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;

Pro 8:31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

The immediate application is of wisdom guiding God in His creative works. The greater application is to Christ as Creator. Implied in the latter portion of the verse is the concept of the earth as a sphere. The word translated as compass (gwx chuwg) literally means a 'circle.' The reference is to the first and second creative day when the earth was merely a sphere covered with water. See Genesis 1:1-8.

The point is that during the creative week, wisdom personified in Christ was there with the Father participating in the creative work. Throughout the creative process, wisdom (in the person of Christ) was with God. Clearly implied is the fellowship and intimacy of familial love which existed between the Son and the Father in eternity past.

As the creative work was completed, wisdom (personified in Christ) rejoiced in His perfect work, especially in the inhabited part of the earth wherein God had placed man. Notice how that wisdom (in Christ) from the creative week delighted in imparting itself to men. Sadly, most have ignored it (Him) from then to now. See John 1:10.

Joh 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Pro 8:32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

Pro 8:33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

Wisdom (in the person of Christ) therefore cries out for mankind to pay heed. There indeed are rich blessings for those who hearken to wisdom and hearken to the Word of Christ. One will never go wrong to follow after godly wisdom or follow after Jesus Christ. They are virtually synonymous.

“Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.” The thought largely has descended from the lofty heights of wisdom in Christ’s creative work to everyday wisdom. Nevertheless, godly wisdom is a priceless treasure as noted above. The godly advice once again is to listen to discipline, chastening, and correction. The thought closely parallels that of 8:10. The flesh never likes to be corrected or rebuked. But the wisdom of God is to receive it and refuse it not.

Pro 8:34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

The personality once again is wisdom (but the greater One is Christ). There is great blessing in paying heed to godly wisdom. There is great wisdom in waiting at the door of wisdom’s house. In the Old Testament, that likely was the Temple/Tabernacle. In the New Testament, that undoubtedly is the local church. There, the wisdom of God is heard multiple times on Sunday and during the mid-week service.

Though the metaphor is of wisdom’s house, the obvious application of that today can only be the local church. The greater point is that there is great blessing in paying heed to the wisdom of God at the house of godly wisdom.

Pro 8:35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.

Pro 8:36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

As throughout much of this chapter, there is a dual application. On the one hand, there is life and favor of the Lord in finding wisdom. On the other hand, there certainly is life and favor in finding Christ who is unto us wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30).

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

1Co 1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Both are blessings which will last for time and eternity. Those who sin against wisdom bring only hurt to themselves and an early death. Likewise, those who reject Christ certainly are fools and will face the second death.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.