

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

THE CALL OF WISDOM, PROVERBS 1:20-33

A. Questions to examine

1. Who are the foolish?
2. Who is Wisdom?
3. Do bad things only happen to bad people?

B. Outline of 1:20-33

1. Wisdom calls out to the foolish 20-23
 - a. A public invitation for the foolish to leave their folly (20-22), *Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?"*
 - 1) Two rhetorical questions
 - a) How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?
 - b) How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?
 - 2) Wisdom declares that there are choices to be made, David Atkinson, ... *Wisdom is a sort of town crier, calling aloud at the street corner, making an appeal in the public squares.*
 - b. A promise of blessing (23), *If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.*
 - 1) By responding to wisdom's rebuke a foolish person can become wise.
 - 2) It is a message of hope.
 - 3) Our message of hope must be proclaimed.
 - c. Who are the foolish?
 - 1) Simple one - naive
 - a) He is not committed to wisdom nor folly
 - 1] Proverbs 8:5, *O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense.*
 - 2] Proverbs 9:4, *"Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" To him who lacks sense she says,*
 - b) He is open and aimless, Proverbs 7:7, *and I saw among the simple ones, I observed among the youths, a young man without sense,*
 - c) He is on the way to death Proverbs 1:32, *For waywardness kills the simple, and the complacency of fools destroys them;*
 - 2) Scoffer - mocker
 - a) Read Psalm 1:1-2, *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.*
 - b) He loves being a scoffer, Proverbs 1:22, *How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?*
 - c) He is not teachable and hates reproof, Proverbs 9:7-8, *Whoever corrects a scoffer wins abuse; whoever rebukes the wicked gets hurt. A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you; the wise, when rebuked, will love you.*
 - d) He is proud and contentious
 - 1] Proverbs 21:24, *The proud, haughty person, named "Scoffer," acts with arrogant pride.*
 - 2] Proverbs 22:10, *Drive out a scoffer, and strife goes out; quarreling and abuse will cease.*
 - e) He will be judged, Proverbs 19:29, *Condemnation is ready for scoffers, and flogging for the backs of fools.*

- 3) Fool
 - a) He hates knowledge. Proverbs 1:22, *“How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?”*
 - b) He enjoys wickedness, Proverbs 10:23, *Doing wrong is like sport to a fool, but wise conduct is pleasure to a person of understanding.*
 - c) He is arrogant and careless Proverbs 14:16, *The wise are cautious and turn away from evil, but the fool throws off restraint and is careless.*
 - d) He always wants to talk but never wants to listen Proverbs 18:2, *A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing personal opinion.*
 - e) He will not receive correction, Proverbs 17:10, *A rebuke strikes deeper into a discerning person than a hundred blows into a fool.*
 - f) He is dangerous, Proverbs 17:12, *Better to meet a she-bear robbed of its cubs than to confront a fool immersed in folly.*
 - g) His complacency will destroy him, Proverbs 1:32, *For waywardness kills the simple, and the complacency of fools destroys them;*

- d. Who is Wisdom?
 - 1) Christ is the wisdom
 - a) When the Logos is compared to wisdom many of the attributes are the same.
 - b) The wisdom seems to be somewhat independent of God.

 - 2) Wisdom is an attribute of God
 - a) Wisdom writers used personification - ascribing personal traits to inanimate objects or to abstract ideas and principles.
 - 1] Isaiah 55:12, trees “clapping their hands”
 - 2] Ezekiel 36:8, God addressing the “mountains of Israel”
 - 3] Psalm 85:10, “righteousness and peace kiss”

 - b) He makes wisdom known and available to man.
 - c) Athanasius, *The One Word of God is distinct from the Words of God’s Commands.*

2. Wisdom denounces and warns those who won’t listen (24-31)
 - a. Rejection of wisdom by fools (24-25), ***Because I have called and you refused, have stretched out my hand and no one heeded, and because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof,***

 - b. Response by wisdom (26-28), ***I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you, when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but will not find me.***
 - a) Wisdom will laugh at fools’ calamity and mock when terror strikes.
 - b) Wisdom will not respond to their calls and will not be found.

 - c. Result of rejecting wisdom (29-31), ***Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devices.***
 - a) The foolish hate knowledge and choose not to fear the Lord.
 - b) They will not receive counsel and despise reproof.
 - c) Therefore, they will reap what they sow.

3. Wisdom summarizes her message and sets the tone for the rest of the book (32-33), ***For waywardness kills the simple, and the complacency of fools destroys them; but those who listen to me will be secure and will live at ease, without dread of disaster.***
 - a. There is destruction for the foolish.
 - b. There is blessing for those who seek wisdom.

- c. Do bad things only happen to bad people? And do good things only happen to good people? Note Psalm 73.
- 1) I think we would agree that good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people.
 - 2) Can't we trust the Book of Proverbs? We can trust the writings of Proverbs as God-inspired principles not promises.
 - 3) We have issues to consider
 - a) There is evil in the world
 - 1] God is not the author of sin.
 - 2] Sin is a byproduct of the creation of humanity with free will.
 - b) There is a divine perspective
 - 1] Good is to be defined in relationship to the will of God.
 - 2] Good is not our short-term wants but our long-term welfare.
 - c) Good people are not the only victims
 - 1] God is a fellow sufferer with mankind due to evil
 - 2] He took sin and its evil effects upon Himself.
 - 3] *Salvian the Presbyter, We never suffer in proportion to our deeds, and God deals with us much more leniently than we deal with Him.*
 - d) Rejoice in God's victory
 - 1] There is more to life than this life.
 - 2] Wrongs will be made right.
 - e) Reflect on the wisdom of trusting God
 - 1] I don't have simple answers concerning the presence of evil with fools prospering and good people suffering.
 - 2] I do have a simple faith, one in which I can trust God who is faithful, omnipotent and good.
 - 3] I don't know all things now but I am thankful I have a personal relationship with the One Who know all things and is all loving.

CONCLUSION

- A. Am I personally wise? Do I live what I believe out of hearts of gratitude to God?
- B. Am I interpersonally foolish? Do I find reasons not to share truth with the naive, scoffers and fools?
- C. David Atkinson, *Wisdom reproves those who will not listen, laughs at those who ignore her advice, but offers safety and security to those who heed her call.*