

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

FATHERLY TALK ABOUT WISDOM, PROVERBS 3:13 - 26

- A. Wisdom fosters well-being (13-18)
1. Principle - there is blessing in wisdom (13), *Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding,*
 2. Benefits of wisdom (14-18)
 - a. Wisdom surpasses materialism (14-15), *for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.*
 - 1) Wisdom provides better benefits
 - 2) They are more profitable and longer lasting - ask any investor in the market.
 - 3) Athanasius (3rd C.), *Don't let the desire to possess things take hold of you. For what do we gain by acquiring things we cannot take with us?*
 - 4) Augustine (4th C.), *Souls rise more to spiritual things the more they die to fleshly things.*
 - b. Wisdom brings fulness of life (16), *Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.*
 - 1) Personification of wisdom as a giver of gifts.
 - 2) The right hand offer is quantitative.
 - 3) The left hand offer is qualitative - wealth is tied to honor.
 - 4) Long life with no thought for its quality could be a curse rather than a blessing.
 - c. Wisdom brings contentment (17), *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*
 - 1) Psalm 4:8, *In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.*
 - 2) Peace is tied to righteousness (giving God His due) and justice (giving man his due), Prov. 2:9
 - 3) Athanasius, *The Lord doesn't allow unthankful people to have peace.*
 - d. Wisdom brings value to life (18), *She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.*
 - 1) Wisdom nurtures life that blesses others.
 - 2) David Atkinson, *All Wisdom's paths are peace, wholeness, health, contentedness - not only in our inner heart, but also in our outward network of relationships in the world...Life is intended to be lived in all its fulness, and Wisdom is pointing the way... Life is a treasure to be celebrated.*
 - 3) There is no place for stoic Christianity. Atkinson, *Human life in this world is to be affirmed, celebrated and enjoyed, and Wisdom points the way.*
- B. Wisdom was the cornerstone of creation (19-20), *The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.*
1. God is at the creative center of all things
 - a. Wisdom is understood as an attribute of God in the Old Testament.
 - b. Wisdom is an instrument of God, a tool in His hand.
 2. Wisdom and the Person of Jesus Christ
 - a. In the New Testament God's tool is not an attribute but a Person, the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, Hebrews 1:1-3a, *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*
 - b. Can we determine that Jesus is the Wisdom of the Old Testament?
 - 1) No, there is a parallel but we need not take it that far. Jesus is not an attribute of God. He is God.
 - 2) Old Testament descriptions of God are accurate but they are much clearer in the New Testament because Jesus is the exact representation of the Father.
 - 3) The relationship of God and wisdom to His creation is found in more detail in Prov. 8:22-31.

- c. David Atkinson, *Proverbs 3:19-20 is set in the middle of a chapter of instructions about right living. The person who finds wisdom - the person who is in tune with God's creative purposes for the world, and who lives in the light of God's ordering of the world - will truly live.*
- C. Wisdom fosters well-being (21-26)
- 1. The father exhorts his child to gain wisdom (21), *My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion,*
 - 2. He gives motivational reasons (22-26), *and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes, for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.*
 - a. Wisdom brings a respected life, Hippolytus (2nd C.), *The wise inherit, but the wicked are disgraced like fools.*
 - b. Wisdom promotes confidence, Basil (4th C.), *Although we can't understand the reasons why God ordained troubles, the One who is wise and who loves us arranged them for us.*
 - c. Wisdom enables rest, Isaac of Nineveh (7th C.), *If one believes in God's providence, there is no reason to be anxious,*
 - d. Wisdom seekers are protected by God, Augustine, *I don't know what temptations I can resist, and which ones I can't. But there is hope because You are faithful.*

CONCLUSION

- A. God Who created all things cares about His creation.
- B. He wants what's best for us.
- C. Seeking wisdom pleases Him. It pleased Him when Solomon sought wisdom.
- D. Lactantius (4th C.), *The supreme act of worshiping God is praise toward Him from the mouth of a righteous (wise) person.*
- E. Wisdom is living one's life well in light of eternity.