

498 The Wisdom of God

In his lengthy discussions with his friends, Job struggles to make sense of all the woes that have come upon him (Job 1.6-2.13), and cries out later on, “But where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?” (28.12, KJV). That is a very good question in these turbulent days, and Man has always fancied his own answer, “Wisdom is found - in me”.

But the Lord in His Word tells us otherwise, and urges us to seek and find wisdom from its true and only source, Almighty God Himself: “Thy word giveth light ... For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth [cometh] knowledge and understanding ... Happy is the man [that] findeth wisdom, and the man [that] getteth understanding ... Get wisdom, get understanding ... Wisdom is the principal thing; [therefore] get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding ... The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding ... If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally ... and it shall be given him” (Psalm 119.130 / Proverbs 2.6; 3.13; 4.5,7; 9.10 / James 1.5). We need God’s wisdom!

In I Kings 3.3 we read, “And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places”. Here is a young, mixed-up king, in sore need of true wisdom! In a vision the Lord said to Solomon, “Ask what I shall give thee”, and Solomon made a humble, sensible request, “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad ...” (from 3.5-9).

The Lord duly acted, “Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart”, plus the gifts of riches, honour and length of days – IF Solomon would walk in the Lord’s ways (3.10-14). In subsequent years there were times when Solomon did faithfully serve the Lord, notably in his overseeing the construction and dedication of the temple, culminating in his wonderful prayer of praise (I Kings Chapter 8). Then, “But king Solomon loved many strange women ... Solomon clave to these in love” despite God’s clear warnings (from I Kings 11.1-2). “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, [that] his wives” - rather a lot of them! - “turned away his heart after other gods” (11.3-4a). The Lord was angry, of course; judgment was duly promised (11.9-14), and was later enacted in terms of division, defeat and the exile of Israel and Judah from their land. Over the years King Solomon had, knowingly or unknowingly, slowly swapped God’s wisdom for his own, with terrible consequences.

We learn from Solomon, and from many others in the Bible and in times since, that man's wisdom is false and dangerous, leading to pride and downfall. In James 3.15 we read that man's wisdom "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" – because it purports to be "the real thing", but in reality it directly opposes the wisdom granted by God Himself. Instead - "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle [and] easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (3.17).

Such heavenly wisdom is to be held humbly, for it is from the Lord, as a spiritual gift, to be used for the blessing of others and for the glory of God: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not on thine own understanding ... Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3.5-7 / Romans 12.16b).

In drawing to a close this time, we note the unrivalled wisdom of both God the Father and God the Son. Concerning Jesus we read "... Never man spake like this man ... Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God ... who of God is made unto us wisdom ... In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (from John 7.46 / I Corinthians 1.24,30 / Colossians 2.3). Secular philosophers might care to take note! – see Colossians 2.8.

And regarding God the Father we read – "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men ... God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" (from I Corinthians 1.25,27a / see also Isaiah 55.8-9). Thus God's Gospel of grace, "ordained before the world unto our glory", is hidden from worldly wisdom, a "mystery", which God has revealed only to His people, by His Spirit (from I Corinthians 2.6-16 / and eg., Ephesians 3.8-12).

We see that the Holy Spirit soon answered Job's question for him – "And unto man he, (that is, God), said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that [is] wisdom; and to depart from evil [is] understanding" (Job 28.(12-)28).

It is as simple and as profound as that.

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