

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 1 - Study 22 The Bible's Book of Proverbs was written by Solomon, son of David, King of Israel.

C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: 1 Kings 7; a wise prayer. Proverbs 8, 9; lessons and words about '**the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom**', hope, knowledge, holy instruction, understanding, discretion, God's blessing, righteous long life, living well, and study of Christian ethics and moral philosophy.

These are brief studies, not
“teachings” or “doctrines”.

Volume 1, Study 22

Here we consider three kinds of wisdom in Scripture. We begin in Proverbs to see what Solomon says about his kind of wisdom, and later we shall look to the New Testament to see what it says about Solomon.

But first, when did Solomon receive his great wisdom and for what purpose?

2Chronicles 1:6-10) And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it. In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead. Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?

1:11) And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge *for thyself*, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

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The passages we shall study essentially speak for themselves, but as always I will insert some comments. If you admire (as I do) the writings of Solomon then some of my comments at first may seem disrespectful. But let us get on with the study -

Proverbs 8:1-3) Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? [In the city] She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the [crossing of] paths. She crieth at the gates [of Jerusalem], at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

We must understand that King Solomon is speaking in this chapter 1) *as wisdom itself* and 2) it is speaking *out of Solomon's extended experience* as King of a large empire that had been carved out by King David, his father...which empire extended from the Euphrates River in the north to Egypt in the south. Solomon's *concept of keeping and maintaining* the empire was quite different from David's *acquiring the empire*.

God had given Solomon (per his request) wisdom *to rule over* this large empire and particularly *over God's people Israel*. The wisdom was *not* for keeping and maintaining the empire; it was for *wisely governing the people*.

However, Solomon came to so value his wisdom that he applied it to everything... particularly his fame, wealth, and glory... which, as we know, was not God's will for him. Let me explain: fame, wealth, and glory were given to him, along with this wisdom, by God. If Solomon had simply received it and not tried to add to it or change it more to his liking, then all the glory would have gone to his God. Ah, but the glory became much more about Solomon than about Yahweh.

In his keeping and maintaining the empire (this also was to be God's work), Solomon depended upon using his wisdom in making agreements, pacts, and treaties with nations within the empire and nations outside the empire. Amid such endeavors, then, he chose methods similar to the methods of the nations (and thus he acquired many wives from the royal houses of other nations). Moreover, to add to and expand the fame, wealth, and glory God had given him, he sought to glorify the empire and especially his capital city of Jerusalem (which was supposed to be *Yahweh's holy city of Jerusalem*).

Let us now see what this wisdom speaks to us (of itself) out of Solomon's own heart -

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

The wisdom within Solomon is speaking out...not only to Israelites, but also to the many people who come to Solomon and to the empire's wealthy and glorious capital city.

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

In other words, "You have come to the great city of wisdom where the great and wise king rules the largest empire (i.e. at the time) and there is much wisdom that you can take home with you. So pay attention."

Solomon did not think in terms of expanding the borders of the empire. Solomon though in terms of forming and expanding a commonality of nations connected together by his teachings. By his intellect, he would greatly expand beyond the bounds of the empire which his father had formed. Solomon's intent was something like (later in history by way of Alexander the Great) the massive spreading of language and influence out of Macedonia and Greece.

Note that by the time Solomon wrote these words he had studied long and hard about all the varied things of the world, also of the world's environment. He had brought in wise men from many nations to teach him their wisdoms so that he might expand what the Lord had given him. The wisdom from his God and 'the fear of the Lord' was but the beginning of Solomon's wisdom and knowledge...and all were invited to partake of it.

8:6-9) Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward [i.e. twisted or devious] or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth [such wisdom], and right to them that find [such] knowledge [valuable].

8:10) Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

A great many people visited Jerusalem for a great many reasons: trade, commerce, to pay taxes, to pay tribute, etc. However, all became amazed at the riches in the city that glorified King Solomon. Therefore, all were in awe of the king's wisdom and work and everything that it had achieved for the king and for Jerusalem.

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

Many visitors arriving from other nations far and wide brought with them some of their own wisdom and new things and '**witty inventions**'. Such visitors always desired to tell and/or show their wisdom. And Solomon always took advantage of other impressive wisdoms and absorbed them into his own growing wisdom by way of the knowledge from afar that entered the gates of Jerusalem.

8:13-16) The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward [i.e. twisted or devious] will mouth, do I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Solomon had a fear and respect of the Lord that, unlike his father, was focused upon this gift of wisdom given him by God. Versus 14 through 16 manifest Solomon's great admiration and respect for his gift: a leader, politician, or president may have a gift of

speech; a priest or pastor may have a gift of organization; a Christian may have a 'gift of the Spirit'. As Solomon admired, valued, properly used, but also personally benefited from his gift...so do many gifted (and God-gifted) men and women.

8:17-18) I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

Solomon's concept of his wisdom had merged together with his concept of righteousness and concept of blessing. In other words, as he uses his God-given gift, he sees it as "working in righteousness amid blessing". He keeps and maintains the empire given him by God, through his father David, by agreements and treaties and marriages into the royal families of other nations. A large portion of the wealth that came to Solomon and the city of Jerusalem came from the nations in payments of tribute, but also in the form of gifts from kings and wealthy businessmen hoping for Solomon's favors.

Ah, but a great deal of wealth came to Solomon's administration in Jerusalem by means of heavy taxation upon his own people, the Israelites. So much was this the case that when Solomon's son took the throne and decided that he needed a little more income from taxation (likely the flow of gifts to his father had substantially decreased) most of the tribes of Israel rebelled and split off from his administration in Jerusalem.

8:19-21) My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

Again we see that Solomon's judgments, accomplished within his gift of wisdom, was related (in his mind) to 'the way of righteousness'. Moreover, the reward for loving Solomon's wisdom (thus loving Solomon) was to 'inherit substance' and be filled with 'treasures'. Such was the promise from the great wisdom of the wisest (and possibly the richest) man that ever lived.

Now we see some of the claims of Solomon's wisdom -

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

This does not mean that God had in Himself this wisdom. It means that God owned (i.e. as an object) this wisdom in regards to the world, which he was in the process of creating, in which men would dwell...and such wisdom would be helpful to the people...if their leaders would have some of it.

8:23-29) I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth [i.e. the firm dry land] was. When there were no depths [i.e. oceans formed], I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, [and] before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth [dry land], nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world [i.e. hills and mountains]. When he prepared the heavens [i.e. above the land], I was there: when he set a compass [i.e. the seashore] upon the face [i.e. surface] of the depth: When he established the [moist] clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment [i.e. not go beyond the seashore]: when he appointed the foundations of the earth [i.e. springs, streams, rivers of the land]:

8:30) Then I was by him [i.e. God], as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, [and was] rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

This is Solomon's concept of the gift that is in him. He glorifies it, honors it, thinks that it is "righteousness before God", thinks that all men should see what it has done for him and therefore they should desire it...and therefore Solomon is deceived by it...and it leads him on to his downfall.

8:32) Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.

Before receiving the gift of wisdom, Solomon had ‘**obtained favor of the Lord**’. After Solomon had given himself over to the gift more than over to the Giver, he ‘**obtained disfavor of the Lord**’.

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



Now we continue -

Proverbs 9:1-2) Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

In chapter 8 the speaker was the wisdom itself (i.e. within King Solomon). Here King Solomon testifies from his knowledge of his wisdom. Obviously he is impressed with grander and he sees his wisdom as grand. He is not the only one who sees his wisdom as grand; in fact, if he had been modest regarding his abilities, then he would have had the whole world trying to convince him of how great he was.

9:3) She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth [i.e. has a need for] understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish [i.e. all that is not of such wisdom], and live; and go [on your way] in the way of understanding.

9:7) He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.

Solomon considers the wisdom of his advice to be more than adequate. Therefore, he shall not shame himself in stooping to ‘reprove scorers’, nor will he place ‘blots’ upon his stellar record by rebuking wicked men in their foolishness...because -

9:8-9) Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Solomon did not like to be hated. He liked to be loved and appreciated; indeed, he demanded it from his own people and he worked hard to receive it from foreigners. However, in the end of his tenure on the throne, he was oblivious to the dislike and growing hatred of the common people in Israel due to the heavy tax burden he had placed upon them. The same could be said of the continued tribute demanded of the nations within the empire.

9:10) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. [For a moment in this verse it is the wisdom within Solomon that speaks...] For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

Solomon had been raised in David's household under David's ‘**fear the Lord**’. He was familiar with all teaching of it and he calculated that the teaching was ‘**the beginning**’ of his own preparation for receiving his gift of wisdom.

Also he had been raised in the ‘**understanding**’ of the responsibilities of a king over ‘**the holy**’ things of the tabernacle and priesthood. At the beginning of this study, read again the verses that illustrate Solomon's lavish leadership as king during a ‘**holy**’ festival of the Mosaic Law. He had been taught and well and had learned about those responsibilities. As such he also considered his ‘**knowledge**’ as ‘**holy**’.

The voice of the wisdom in Solomon still speaks, and it says, “**For by me [i.e. wisdom, not God] thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.**”

9:12) If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself...

The wisdom of gaining such wisdom is for ‘**thyself**’... Indeed, the great wisdom within Solomon had come to be more for himself than for God’s people. It had never been the higher wisdom of heaven to well know Almighty God; it had been a great wisdom, and been meant, for ruling over God's people. Solomon had used it for himself and for his worldly prestige and for his worldly wealth more than for God's people. (God’s house was 7 years in building, 1Kings 6:38. Solomon’s house was 13 years in building, and he built a Summer House in Lebanon, 1Kings 7...see all of this chapter.)

In glorifying himself, he thought that he was glorifying his wisdom from God and therefore thought that he was glorifying God.

...but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

But if having such wisdom you foolishly decide to scorn the unwise (who scorn wise ones like Solomon), then you alone shall bear their hatred.

Sadly, it was this very thing that Solomon did in his scornful disregard for the complaints of the people about their heavy and increasing tax burden.



9:13) A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.

Interestingly, Solomon considers such clamor (perhaps about taxes) from the simple people “who know nothing” to be like foolish talk by women who would defile others by unwise and misleading teachings.

9:14-15) For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, To call passengers [i.e. passersby] who go right on their ways:

Solomon’s self-righteous concept of his wisdom values such ‘clamors’ about as much as he values the teachings of the whores in the center of the city who call out to passersby regarding their wares.

9:16-18) [The whore calls out] Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth [i.e. needs] understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But [Solomon says] he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.



Early on, I had stated that there were three kinds of wisdom mentioned in scripture. The wisdom that God had given Solomon (which he misused, abused, and added to) is one. The last several verses imply another type of wisdom owned by the minions of Satan.

Before proceeding with the third kind of wisdom, another comment is necessary. When any gift of God (much less a great gift from God for governing people) is received by a person and that person honors the purpose of the gift and honors even more the Giver of the gift, then people are helped and God gains the glory; however, it was not long before Solomon was gaining the glory. The kings of his age admired him and many do so today. So often this can be the case.

I love the Bible and God saw to it that the writings of Solomon became a significant part of the Scriptures. Indeed, I love the Proverbs of Solomon no less because of Solomon’s life and misuse of his great gift. Yet, we must realize that there is a higher wisdom that each Christian should desire even more, which wisdom Solomon did not have. Solomon knew of the higher wisdom because he had observed it daily in his father, King David. The kings of nations did not honor David for his wisdom; they feared David because of his Great God.

Solomon benefited from that fear, for those kings of nations yet feared David's God. It was

with Solomon's foolish son upon David's throne that the fear in the hearts of the kings of the nation began to dissipate.

Kings of nations may give adulation and even honor to a particularly gifted strong king or ruler, but that which keeps kings contained in their own kingdoms is their fear of a strong king who has a long and powerful arm...who regularly uses it.

However, even more, over the centuries, the kings of nations feared godly men like the prophets of Yahweh...the God of Israel. Kings of nations may have scoffed at many of Israel's kings, yet they paid attention to Israel's prophets.

Therefore, we must honor the Proverbs written by Solomon, even as God has included them in the Bible. Yet, you and I should petition God for a hunger like King David's higher hunger toward his Lord and Master.



The third Higher Wisdom is manifested in this song -

Psalms 139:1-3) <To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.> O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought [from] afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

139:4-6) For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Yet, Solomon thought that he attained to such knowledge.

139:7-10) Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

139:11-13) If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: [indeed,] thou hast covered me [even from] in my mother's womb.

139:14) I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul [surely] knoweth right well.

139:15) My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

This infers the depths of his mother's womb, and the fact that man is made of the dust of the ground.

139:16) Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect [i.e. yet incomplete]; and in thy book all my members were written [as yet in the womb], which in continuance [of your forming hand] were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them [outwardly known or knowledge by men].

139:17) How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee [in my thoughts upon thee].

139:19) Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

139:22) [Yes,] I hate them with perfect [i.e. complete or whole] hatred: I count them mine enemies.

139:23) Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Yes, the kind of wisdom given to Solomon can be like a light in a dark world. Ah, but the kind of agape-wisdom that God placed in David (even while in his mother's womb) is *true light within darkness*, such that *even darkness is full of light*.

1Corinthians 13:8-10) Charity [agape] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge [and/or wisdom], it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect [i.e. complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

13:11,12) When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13:13) And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity [agape].



Let us now consider the passages in the New Testament that contain 'Solomon' -
Matthew 6:29-32) And yet I [Jesus] say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)...

The Gentiles (of all time) have admired Solomon's wisdom from which they considered that he gained his wealth, long life, etc. Indeed, Solomon's teachings have much to do with preparing the foundation of knowledge that would yield a good life.

...for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

On the other hand, Jesus taught his disciples the first and last part of this verse. They were not too concerned with what to eat, drink, clothes, etc.

6:33,34) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Jesus speaks of a higher wisdom, higher than any in the world including Solomon's wisdom.

Matthew 12:42) The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon [which she understood to have been given of Solomon's God]; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

The 'greater than Solomon' speaks of things higher than Solomon's things.

Luke 12:27-40) Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

12:31-34) But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto

you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Jesus (King of kings and Lord of lords) taught differently from Solomon (who would have been shocked at Jesus' Heavenly Wisdom).

John 10:23) And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch [i.e. where teachings of Judea's leaders were often given to the people].

10:24) Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

10:25,26) Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

10:27) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Solomon's writings were greatly admired by these Jews, and I suspect if Solomon were alive at this time that he would be one of them challenging Jesus' wisdom and value system.

Also see the whole of Acts 3:11 when Jesus' apostles were also teaching the people in Solomon's porch (verse 11), because the apostles were living and walking as Jesus had instructed them in the above passages.

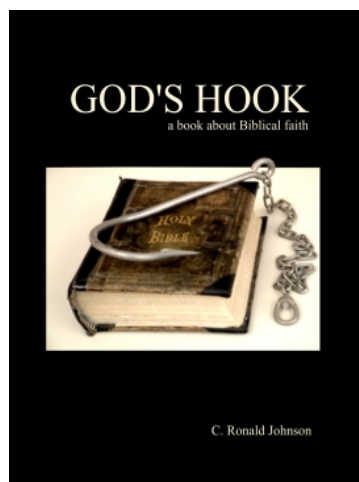
Also see Acts 5:11-15 as God continued honoring the apostles as they honored Him and His son, Jesus.

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Acts 7:47 ...Solomon built him [i.e. God] an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?

What wisdom is in your heart?

These are short Bible studies by C. Ronald Johnson at Christian Wilderness Press



a book
about
Biblical
Faith

the life of
Moses
and the
Exodus

