

Glory or Shame Awaits Us

Proverbs 3:19-35

The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens; By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew. My son, let them not depart from your eyes—Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you. Do not devise evil against your neighbor, For he dwells by you for safety's sake. Do not strive with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm. Do not envy the oppressor, And choose none of his ways; For the perverse person is an abomination to the LORD, But His secret counsel is with the upright. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just. Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble. The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

There is a lot of good nuggets of wisdom in this passage of Scripture. What we find IN this passage of Scripture is ultimately that wisdom leads to **life and peace and blessings and grace, FROM GOD**. But just as it is life and peace and blessings and grace that comes from God, also it is wisdom that comes from God. And where do we go to get wisdom from God. The Word of God, the Holy Bible. We can get wisdom and instruction of course from any of the books of the Bible, any one of the 66 books that make up the Bible, but we specifically are looking at today, a passage of Scripture in the book of Proverbs which is a book of the wisdom that comes from God. A caveat or warning though, in seeking out the wisdom that is in the Bible, in the book of wisdom we know of as the Word of God, is that wisdom comes **FROM GOD** and can only be revealed to us by God Himself, through His Holy Spirit and then that God is not equipping us with His wisdom so that we can become autonomous or self-existing and where we are self-existing independent of God or others. He alone is God Almighty and WE are all called to be the Body of Christ. In conjunction to that, one can read the Bible over and over and over again but if one has not received the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, then they will not be able to operate in the wisdom that comes from God. To get things started in the wisdom that comes from God can be found in **Matthew 16:15-17**, "[Jesus] said to them, **But who**

do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." The wisdom that comes from God reveals to us that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed one sent by God to be the Savior of the world, to all who will believe in Him. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17) The next step, which could incidentally happen simultaneously, Jesus explained, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:23) The apostle Peter later explained in Acts 5:32, "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." That is where we become, as Jesus put it, born-again when we receive the Holy Spirit that THEN begins guiding us in the wisdom that comes from God. Then, and only then, can one begin to experience the life, the abundant life that Jesus talked about, of being filled with the Holy Spirit, and have the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, the blessings of God to where you are greatly blessed so that you can be a blessing to others in sharing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the grace of God to where you are more fully capable of overcoming all things (in Christ) that come against you. Praise God from whom all blessings flow, as "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1:17) He is the Great I AM, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and as Jesus said, "these things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Jesus HAS overcome the world, and so IN CHRIST we will overcome the world also!

The book of Proverbs for the most part is a collection of wise sayings by King Solomon, except for what we know of Proverbs 30 and 31 as being from Agur and King Lemuel, respectively. Bible scholars have questioned who King Lemuel was who wrote Proverbs 31. Some have said it was Solomon himself, others King Hezekiah, and then others a fictional king, kind of how the story of King Midas and everything he touched turned to gold was designed to tell a parable or lesson. Yet, I digress, but not really. King Midas had to learn that having all the riches on earth would not bring him the fulfillment in life that he truly wanted. Just as with us, the things of this world, including the wisdom of this world is all just a kind of "fools gold" that won't lead to what will satisfy the soul that leads to what we have been created for. Proverbs begins with the introduction by Solomon

saying, "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity; To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion—a wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, to understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles. **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**" (**Proverbs 1:1-7**) Notice the contrast that Solomon establishes by saying the fear of the Lord is contrary to the fool who despises wisdom. What a great way to get someone's attention, isn't it, saying "fools despise wisdom" and "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge"? No one wants to be called or be known as a fool, I hope. And Solomon says to know, perceive, and receive for instruction for prudence and discretion. Webster's dictionary gives a definition of prudence as, "being wise in one's affairs, being cautious, or being careful in providing for the future." There are many pitfalls that are all around us and there is always someone standing behind them calling out to us, "come over here", to where as we get near them, we "ahhhhh", fall down into the pit that is full of darkness. And just as Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." (**Matthew 6:19-20**) Shortly afterwards, in that discourse, which we call the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (**Matthew 6:31-33**) Now that is some prime wisdom straight from the Word of God, through Jesus, our Savior and Lord!

Similar to what Solomon said in comparing the wise who fear the Lord and the fools who despise wisdom, we find God speaking to His people, the Israelites when He led them to and into the Promised Land, "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live." (**Deuteronomy 30:19**) Wisdom or foolishness, blessings or curses. Once again, where is that wisdom coming from? How do we attain wisdom? From the top universities or from hanging out in affluent and influential social circles, with the elite and worldly upper class or with the proud and knowledgeable—you know those people that know everything? Of course that would be a definitive no. Many of the most brilliant minds in history and many of the richest and most influential people in history did not have the wisdom that we are looking at today. There is the worldly wisdom and then there's the wisdom from God.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom [knowledge]." (**Proverbs 9:10, 1:7**) "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." The wisdom that comes from God then is to fear God and to hate evil. That doesn't mean of course, to hate on people who are operating in evil. To the contrary we are supposed to love our enemies. That fear of the Lord is "Humb[ing] yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up," (**James 4:10**) and "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." (**Romans 12:19**) And then, as it says in **1 Corinthians 3:19**, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He catches the wise in their own craftiness." None of us can fool God. We can't convince God to get on our plan, we need to get on His plan and purpose.

That's where we can transition into our passage of Scripture for today. "The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens; By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew." Very similarly, we read in **Psalms 24:1-2**, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters." "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." (**Colossians 1:16**) Here is the great mystery that has been revealed to us in this time. The "Him" that the Apostle Paul was speaking of in that last Scripture is Jesus. The previous verse Paul says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." (**Colossians 1:15**) That is the original King James version. Perhaps a better translation is in the New King James version that says, "the firstborn over all creation." All things were created through Jesus and for Jesus. He is the firstborn over all creation. He wasn't created by God, He was begotten of God. Maybe a way to understand Him in our human minds is by saying that Jesus is of the very being of God. Yes, God and His ways are hard to understand but it needs to be clear to us that the Son of God was not created by God. Why is that important? It has to be understood that for God to be able to forgive us of our sins against Him only a perfect sacrifice would do. He had to have the Righteousness that is of God. **Everything** was created through the Son and for the Son. That leads us to Jesus being called the Son of God, the only **begotten** Son of God.

The wisdom that we are looking at is the wisdom that comes from God. You may think or ask yourself, "well if all things were created by God, doesn't all wisdom come from God?" That's one of those yes, but know answers. That reminds me of an old classic movie about a group of people in politics that decided to prop up an unknown person,

which they called a "dark horse" candidate. They were trying to win the candidacy by this tactic. Well he ended up being elected and he was anything but a politician, much to their chagrin. He was given the advice to answer all questions by the press with a, "yes, but then again no." That would give him some respectability by him seeming to actually have some intelligence. It's kind of on the same lines as **Proverbs 17:28** that says, "Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive." Yet we don't want to just appear wise, do we? That isn't going to get us anywhere.

In fact where we are being guided, by the wisdom that does come from God is this: we were created by God for His purpose and pleasure. It is very difficult, no actually impossible, to brake out of the programming that we are born into, the wisdom of the world, the ways of the world. We were all born into a sinful nature. "**BUT GOD**, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [that's where His wisdom is leading us], that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which **God prepared beforehand** that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:4-10**)

There it is, the great plan and purpose and wisdom of God and it is only in Christ Jesus that we find the wisdom from God. While it's easy to get tunnel vision and just focus on ourselves and what we need to do to get by, there are a whole lot of other people around us trying to do the same thing. "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you." We are all supposed to be "in this together". We are the body of Christ, the family of God, we are going to be and should be "sit[ting] together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We are being led by God's Holy Spirit to worship God in Spirit and truth and we are to be doing that together. When it is in our power to do so, we are to help one another, encourage one another, pray for one another. For, hopefully, we are all heading to the same place, our eternal home in Christ and really that process begins even now.

As we are called to believe on Jesus for dying on the cross for our sins, and that on the third day, He conquered death and rose from the grave but then we are called to continue "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." (**Hebrews 12:2**) To cling to Him,

for He is our life! (**Deuteronomy 30:20**) The process for us begins in believing in Jesus as our Savior and then we are to be born-again as Jesus put it. In fact, Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (**John 3:3**) Being born-again is where Jesus gives us His Holy Spirit to dwell in us to where He becomes "for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (**1 Corinthians 1:30-31**) God is seeking those who want to be part of His eternal kingdom in His perfect Holiness, Love, and Peace, and Goodness, and Justice. He is now calling us, preparing us, getting us ready for when He calls us home. The author of Hebrews, in chapter 11, describes the faith of those in the Old Testament by saying, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (**Hebrews 11:13**)

This world is not our home. We are pilgrims just passing through. This world was created to be our home but not really. God knew that as he created mankind on this earth and gave them a free-will to make their own choices that we'd get to where it says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (**Romans 3:23**) Paul continues by saying, "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (**Romans 3:24-26**)

So what are we still here for then if God knew His plan would all unravel soon after He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? It certainly isn't to be building up our little kingdom here on earth and it isn't to get all wrapped up in the affairs of this world. Kingdoms come and kingdoms go but we are being called to a greater kingdom. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (**Hebrews 13:14-16**) We are still here to help one another in getting ready for that eternal kingdom that Jesus said He was going to prepare for us, "In My Father's house are many mansions [rooms]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (**John 14:2-3**) "The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just. [and we know that the just shall live by faith] Surely He scorns the

scornful, **But gives grace to the humble.** The wise shall **inherit glory,** But shame shall be the legacy of fools."

God promises us blessings and grace and glory. We may not see much of the fruit of our labors in Christ Jesus on this side of eternity but we can trust God in His promises. The promise that God gave Abraham that, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice," (**Genesis 22:18**) was not fulfilled for over 2000 years until the time of Christ but God did come through on His promise. God promises us eternal life in Christ Jesus and peace and blessings and grace and wisdom and His Righteousness, His Sanctification, and His Redemption in Christ Jesus! Glory or shame awaits each of us but as the Apostle Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (**Romans 1:16**) and then "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (**Romans 8:1**) Praise the Lord!