

## Proverbs, 1

Most people are able to perceive the difference between poetry and prose. Upon reading a passage they can instantly judge to which class of literature the passage belongs. And although both prose and poetry are arranged in line by line format, poetry is based upon something more. And the more is this: poetry makes an impression upon us which is totally other from that produced by normal speech patterns. The strange 'otherness' of poetry is manufactured by diction, and the choice and arrangement of the words. Poetry, then, has an inner spirit and not just an outward form.

Immediately we are removed from the mundane, and are transported into another world. The words are familiar and natural, yet their employment conveys to us a meaning that transcends common verbal expression.

Poetry, of course, takes many forms. And different languages utilize different forms. The earliest Greek poetry was dependent upon the alternation of short and long syllables. Similar, yet subtly different, was Latin poetry, which depended upon accentuation within words. And, of course, rhyming of words is another form and is common to French, English, German, Italian and Spanish poetry. Anglo-Saxon poetry depended upon ALLITERATION. Too, certain types of English and German poetry depend upon a relation of accented to unaccented syllables. Whereas, Arabic poetry depends upon the comparative length of syllables for effectiveness.

The common factor in all of the above forms of poetry is regularity. And this regularity creates an expectation in the mind's ear; and satisfaction depends upon to what extent expectation is fulfilled or unfulfilled. In other words, there is balance and order in poetry. Yet within this balance and order variation must be allowed to exist, for total invariance would produce only dullness.<sup>1</sup>

### Hebrew Poetry

Hebrew poetry is formed around thought and rhythm, or idea and sound, if you will. And this phenomenon has been denominated 'parallelism' by German scholars. To illustrate, consider Hebrew prose which is usually a stream of co-

ordinate sentences linked by conjunctions (in the Hebrew by 'waw consecutives'). In Hebrew poetry, however, an idea is propounded, and then repeated in a different form to preclude monotony. Thus, one line of thought follows parallel to one that has already been written. And this, then, is the fundamental Hebrew poetic form: two lines, the second of which must, to one degree or another, correspond or parallel to the first line. Other lines may be added, but there MUST ALWAYS BE AT LEAST TWO LINES. And there is no syncopation (shortening) in Hebrew poetry; and this fact is important in exegesis, as it aids in explaining nuances of language or pauses. And it should be noted, that the term SELAH is used to designate a stanza structure in and of itself.<sup>2</sup>

### The Meshalim

The Hebrew term MASHAL means 'a precept or unit of doctrine (faith, principle).' And it is this term that is translated 'proverb,' and thus here is the origin of the name of the Book of Proverbs. The term MASHAL is not strictly poetic; indeed, it does not necessarily have to be poetic.

The quip, 'Is Saul also numbered among the prophets (theological students)?', is a MASHAL in I Samuel 10:12. Other examples include:

Gen. 25:23. The oracle of Rebecca; here a comparison of her twin sons are narrated.

Num. 12:6-8. Moses and the prophets. Here, there is a comparison between Moses as a prophet, i.e., a class by himself, and all the other prophets.

Joshua 10:12. The sun at Gibeon. Here, there exists a comparison between the 'long' day of Joshua and a normal day.

Judges 9:8-15. Jotham's fable.

Judges 14:14,18. Samson's riddle and its answer.

I Samuel 15:22ff. Samuel's condemnation of Saul ben Kish. Here, there is a comparison of the man of God that Saul once was with the man he had become.

I Sam. 15:33. The death of Agag.

I Sam. 18:7. The popular song about David and Saul ben Kish. Here, there is a comparison

<sup>1</sup>Robinson, Theodore H. The Poetry of the Old Testament; from notes.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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between Saul and his thousands and David and his tens of thousands.

I Sam. 24:13. David compares himself to Saul ben Kish, i.e., a man of God compared to an apostate.

II Sam. 12:1-4. Nathan's parable; here, David the apostate sinner is compared with David the former man of God.

II Sam. 20:1. Sheba, the son of Bicri; here, apostate rebellion is compared with God's institutions of law and order.

I Kings 12:16. Israel's rebellion against Rehoboam; here, rebellion is compared to law and order.<sup>3</sup>

In each instance cited above, the MASHAL connotes a 'comparison,' thus, a 'proverb' may be viewed as a comparison between God's word or God's doctrine and the way of the world, or 'evil' as a system of thought.

### Proverbs

Mankind craves regularity, order, and a common philosophy. Mankind likes to compare one thing or idea to another. Mankind likes to observe and categorize. And not just in the so-called 'sciences.' But also in emotions, thought, reason, and the spiritual realm. Indeed, this explanation provides a foundation for the disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, philosophy, and theology. And ancient Israel was no exception. Collections of comparisons were gathered and grouped under the title of 'wisdom.' Indeed, 'wisdom' is actually personified; she appears as divine thought or divine character. In fact, 'wisdom' takes on the qualities of an 'hypostasis.' In other words, 'wisdom' becomes analogous to the New Testament idea of 'logos,' the incarnate word of God.<sup>4</sup>

The Book of Proverbs, then, is the collection of the doctrinal statements of Solomon. Indeed, tradition states that Solomon spoke over 3000 such proverbs. All of the proverbs, however, are not Solomon's. The explanation for the existence of Proverbs lies in David's personal history. After the tragic revolt and death of Absalom, David realized that he had been, perhaps, remiss in Absalom's spiritual education. Thus, David determined to

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

instruct his surviving children in 'the way of God and wisdom.' And David took special measures to inculcate God's wisdom in his successor, Solomon.<sup>5</sup>

This explanation provides a foundation for the three sections of the Book of Proverbs:

1. Proverbs 1:7 - 9:18; 19:20-24; chapters 27-29. These three sub-sections are actually attributed to David. David spoke these words to Solomon and Solomon copied them down.
2. Proverbs 10:1-19:19. These are the writings of Solomon.
3. Proverbs 30. Agur's Wisdom. Agur was either an exiled king that taught Solomon or is a pseudonym for Solomon.

Proverbs 31. Lemuel's Wisdom. Lemuel was either an associate of Solomon's or, again, a pseudonym for Solomon. Additionally, it should be added that many scholars directly state that Agur and Lemuel are artificial names. And for what it is worth, the author maintains that Lemuel is certainly a pseudonym for Solomon, for reasons that will be discussed later where more pertinent.

Remember, then, that a proverb is a two line poem. And this is a very simple, yet very eloquent method of instruction. Indeed, it is the simplicity of genius and language combined. Each proverb, then, is a DISTICH, which is a 'couplet; two lines regarded as a unit or stanza.'<sup>6</sup> And the Book of Proverbs employs six distinct types of DISTICHOI, which will now be examined:

**Synonymous distich.** This is the most simple: the presentation of an idea, then the repetition of the same idea. Example: Prov. 11:25, which reads, 'A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.'

**Antithetical distich.** Here, a positive assertion is made in the first line, then the negative declaration is made (or VICE VERSA), and the negative underscores the positive. Examples: Prov. 14:30, 17:22, 15:5. 'A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.' 'A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.' 'A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.'

<sup>5</sup>Thieme, Robert. Proverbs; from notes.

<sup>6</sup>Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary.

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**Synthetic distich.** In this type, the first line presents a truth or reality and the second line restates the subject of the first line; i.e., both lines have a common subject. Examples: Prov. 10:18, 29:18. 'He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.' 'Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.'

**Integral distich.** Here, the first line presents an idea and the second line completes the thought. Examples: Prov. 13:14, 19:20, 22:6,10,15. 'The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.' 'Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.' 'Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old (mature) he will not turn from it.' 'Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.' 'Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.'

**Parabolic distich.** In this distich, the first line explains by example the second line, and the second line embodies the doctrinal truth. In some instances, the order is reversed.

Examples: Prov. 11:22, 25:11 (reversed), 25:25, 26:9, 26:11, 27:15. 'Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.' 'A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.' 'Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.' 'Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.' 'As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.' 'A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day.'

**Comparative distich.** In this type of distich, the first line declares something better than that which is stated in the second line. Examples: Prov. 15:17, 21:19. 'Better a meal of vegetables where there is love, than a fattened calf with hatred.' 'Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.'

### Some anomalies:

**Tetrastich:** this is a four line proverb. Examples: Prov. 24:3,4. Here, the first two lines are synonymous with the second two lines. 'By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.' Prov. 30:5,6. Here is an

example of a synthetic tetrastich. 'Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.' Prov. 30:17. Here is an example of an integral tetrastich. 'The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.'

**Pentastich.** This is a five line proverb. In this type of distich, the first two lines present the subject, then the subsequent three lines expand the subject. Example: Prov. 25:6-7.

'Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you, 'Come up here,' than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman.'

**Hexastich or sexastich.** This is a six line proverb. Here, the first two lines present the subject, and the next four lines develop or expand the subject matter. Example: Prov. 23:12-14. 'Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge. Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.'

**Heptastich.** A seven line distich. First the subject is presented in the initial two lines, then five lines of amplification. Example: Prov. 23:6-8 'Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies; for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. 'Eat and drink,' he says to you, but his heart is not with you. You will vomit up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments.'

**Octastich.** Here, two lines are used to present the subject, then six lines are utilized to amplify the subject. And there is only one octastich in Proverbs. Prov. 6:16-19. 'There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Thieme, Robert. Proverbs; from notes. Fichtner, Die altorientalische Weisheit in ihrer israelitisch-judischen Ausprägung; translated for the author by Ronald Bonaparte; from notes, 1975.

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### Author

The book itself states that Solomon was the primary writer of Proverbs, 1:1, 10:1. And according to I Kings 4:32, Solomon spoke 'three thousand proverbs.' Yet the book as we have it today was probably not compiled until King Hezekiah's reign, 716-687 BC. And the precise date of the words of Agur and of the wisdom of Lemuel is not known. Nor is the date of the acrostic poem (the virtuous wife), Prov. 31:10-31, known.

### Lemuel, Agur and Solomon

The name Lemuel, 'belonging to God,' refers to a person of whom absolutely nothing is understood, except that the warnings of Prov. 31:2-9 were written to his mother. 'The rabbinical commentators identify Lemuel with Solomon, which seems the most likely conjecture.'<sup>8</sup> Grotius identifies Lemuel as Hezekiah; and Gesenius identifies Lemuel as an Arabian (Massa) king or prince. However, Gesenius' identification depends upon translating the word MASSA as the Kingdom of Massa, referred to in Gen. 25:14; therein, Massa was one of the sons of Ishmael. Two items, though, must be noted: 1) In Proverbs 30 the words of Agur are distinctly called MASSA, ORACLES, and there is no contextual indicator for translating the term otherwise; 2) Prov. 31:1-9 refer to 'the oracles' taught to Lemuel by his mother. This could be Bathsheba, and thus Lemuel is Solomon.

The name Agur, 'gathered,' refers to the author of Proverbs 30. Of this individual, all that is known is that he was 'Agur the son of Jakeh.' Tradition holds that the father's name, Jakeh, which is YIQQAHAH, or obedience, is metaphorical and thus refers to David. Some scholars, however, perceive a real individual, perhaps a friend of Solomon's. Proverbs 30:7-9 have been designated 'Agur's Prayer.' And some scholars feel that Agur's approach to God is agnostic, yet reverent. This latter view, it should be noted, is post-modernistic, and probably so much empty babble, for there is no evidence to this perception other than inference and extrapolation.

SHELOMOH, or Solomon, means 'peaceable.' Solomon was the youngest son of David, by Bathsheba. His brothers were Amnon and Chileab,

Absalom and Adonijah, Shephatiah and Ithrean; and all six brothers were born in Hebron, and all six were born of different mothers, according to II Sam 3:2-5. David named Solomon, Solomon; however, God, that is, JEHOVAH ELOHIM, through the prophet Nathan, named Solomon Jedidiah, which means 'the Divine Darling,' according to II Sam 12:24,25. And the name was indicative of the divine favor that was to be his. And based upon I Kings 4:32 and 33 it is safe to say that Solomon was precocious as a child, and spiritually and mentally alive.

In I Kings 1:17, subsequent to the death of Absalom, David promised Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed him as king. However, his brother Adonijah, with the help of Joab, David's nephew, and Abiathar, the High Priest, revolted against David and proclaimed himself king, I Kings 1:25. David's counsel, however, prevailed and Solomon was crowned king. I Kings 3:7 states that Solomon was 18 at the time of his succession; however, it should be noted that Josephus, in 8:7 of his ANTIQUITIES, asserts that he was only 14. And David's dying charge to his young son-king was to dispose of all his enemies. This Solomon did. Adonijah was executed; Abiathar was banished and replaced by Zadok. And Joab was executed by Benaiah, I Kings 2:28-35. Thus, Solomon consolidated his throne, I Kings 2:12,46.

Solomon usually married for political reasons, being the astute king that he was. However, it is questionable whether or not he ever truly loved and was loved by any woman, except for the one woman who refused his attentions. His first marriage was with the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh. And Solomon's wisdom was apparent in his dream at Gibeon, where he sacrificed a 1000 burnt offerings upon the altar of Moses which stood before the Tent of Meeting, I Chronicles 21:29. In the dream, JEHOVAH inquired of Solomon what blessing he most desired. Solomon requested 'wisdom,' rather than fame, glory, wealth, etc.

Solomon truly created a nation called Israel, for he reigned over all the tribes and nations between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates River. Never forget, though, that Solomon's reign was founded upon absolute power. His will was law. Solomon divided his kingdom into 12 principates, and set twelve special 'princes' or officers over each of the

<sup>8</sup>Unger, Merrill F. Unger's Bible Dictionary; page 654.

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principates. And under his administration the wealth of Israel was sensational; some scholars number the Jews at 4 million at this time. Too, Solomon levied his people for workmen, some scholars say to the number of 500,000 men.

These men built two great edifices: a house for God, and a house for Solomon. Indeed, Solomon used David's earmarked dower of 5 billion to build the Temple; and he added to the sum from his own wealth. The building of the Temple took seven years, and it was modeled after the Tabernacle of Moses, with all measurements being doubled. Its architect and architecture were Phoenician (Hiram). And no tool of iron was used in its construction, I Kings 6:7. Construction began in 975 BC. And tradition holds that it was built on the site on which Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac, Mount Moriah.

The Temple was dedicated between the Great Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. And the Ark of the Covenant was moved into the Holy of Holies, and the Shekinah Glory resided therein, II Chronicles 5:11-14. 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep were initially sacrificed at the dedication, I Kings 8:62-66. And the smoke from the burnt offerings thereof must surely have darkened the skies.

Solomon was the greatest businessman in the world at that time. His wealth was beyond belief and his ships plied the waters of the world in commerce. And Solomon himself was a versatile genius without peer; he composed 1005 songs and spoke 3000 proverbs of wisdom, I Kings 4:29-34. And since the book of Proverbs contains 915 verses, we have only a third of his sayings.

Additionally, Solomon wrote the Song of Songs, an epic love poem, to the woman he could not have, who was probably his unfulfilled love, the woman designed by God to complete him. Solomon's besetting sin, however, was his polygamy. I Kings 11:1-8 states that he had 700 wives and three hundred consorts. As a result, Solomon probably never enjoyed the love of the woman that God had intended for him, the Shulamite woman, the subject of the Song of Songs. Finally, after a period of apostasy, during which he wrote Ecclesiastes, Solomon regained his love for God and then died.

And as great and as wise as he was, our Lord acknowledged, 'Behold a greater than Solomon is here!'

### Place of Proverbs in the Canon of Scripture

The Book of Proverbs resides in the Hebrew canon with the three poetic books, Psalms, Job and Proverbs, which are distinguished by a special system of punctuation. And Proverbs has been assigned to the Hagiographa.<sup>9</sup> Whether or not to include the book in the canon was a matter of controversy at Jamnia<sup>10</sup>; and the opposition cited two distinct, dubious passages: Prov. 26:4,5 and 7:7-20. The passage in 7:7-20 was considered libidinous and erotic, and thus was suspect to those theologians of protected education. And the passage in 26:4,5 was considered irreconcilable with Christian love and piety; nevertheless, and after all was examined, an acceptable interpretation of the passage was discovered that mitigated its so-called compromise. In other words, the passage was not correctly translated nor understood by those of pious affectations (and a paucity of scholarship), so they deemed it aberrant. But they were able to bargain an acceptable rendering, which eased their overcompensation.

The Hebrew title of the book is the first word, MISHLE, from MASHAL, a lexical form that may have its provenance in the Assyrian MASHALU; or perhaps, as per Haupt<sup>11</sup>, in the Assyrian MISHLU, meaning 'half,' thus sustaining the idea that a proverb is 'half' of two 'balanced propositions.'<sup>12</sup>

Proverbs 1:1-6 are generally considered to be a prologue, providing the purpose of the book. And

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<sup>9</sup>The Hagiographa is that Jewish division of the Old Testament known as the Ketubim, or writings, and includes Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, and Daniel; in other words, all of the Old Testament not in the Law or the Prophets.

<sup>10</sup>Wurthwein, Ernst. The Text of The Old Testament; page 15: ÓThe consonantal text which is preserved in the medieval manuscripts and forms the basis of our present editions goes back to about A.D. 100. As part of the great Jewish revival which marked the decades after the catastrophe of A.D. 70, the canonical status of certain disputed books of the Old Testament was defined at the Council of Jamnia (late first century A.D.), and an authoritative text of the Old Testament was also established.Ó

<sup>11</sup>Haupt, P. Proverbs; page 32.

<sup>12</sup>Kittel, Rudolf. Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge; vol. ix, page 303.

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within Proverbs exists the concept of Wisdom. The verb is, CHAKAM which is 'to be wise, or act wisely.' The verb is utilized 26 times and usually in the qal stem, meaning 'to be wise.' The piel stem is used less frequently, and means 'to make wise' or 'teaching.' And the term connotes that wisdom that brings success or prosperity in spiritual as well as tangible areas. This type of wisdom was attributed to David in I Sam. 18:14: 'In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him.' Additionally, the Messiah will also have this particular type of wisdom, according to Jer. 23:5 and Isa. 52:13. "The days are coming," declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.' 'See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.'

Here, then, is success as the result of wisdom.

And inherent in the wisdom of the Old Testament, in general, and in Proverbs, specifically, is the teaching or doctrinal knowledge of a real, personal God who is impeccable and exquisite and Who desires that his people reflect His wisdom and its application to every aspect of life, not only the spiritual. And inherent in this desire of the God is the fact that this wisdom may be learned and applied, unlike the wisdom of Greek philosophy, which wisdom lay in congenital intelligence and was not necessarily learned. In other words, the person who learns God's wisdom knows how to speak, knows the Will of God through having his will in subjection, and knows how to live richly, rather than just living.

The substantive for wisdom is, CHOKMA; and it is this term that is personified in Proverbs. And the fact that wisdom is personified as female in the first nine chapters extends from the grammatical gender designation of the noun. However, this does not fully explain the ladylike personification. The full explanation lies in the fact that inner happiness, i.e., true happiness, is achieved only through this wisdom. And this wisdom finds fruition in TRUST in God. Thus, mankind answers or responds to this knowledge of God in TRUST and LOVE and ANIMATION.

Wisdom, then, is not God, but is God's; it is His Word which He has magnified above His Name. Thus, this wisdom is not abstract; it is actual and may be had and used. Wisdom, thereupon, is

God's way of thinking contrasted with evil, which is Satan's way of reasoning. 'It is the adaptation of what we know to what we have to do.'<sup>13</sup>

Wisdom's New Testament pendant is SOPHIA, which is 'wisdom, cleverness, skill, etc.; a right application of knowledge; wisdom regarded as residing in the mind.'<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in Proverbs 8:12 'it is quite clear that this word is used to describe the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The description that follows in this chapter shows clearly that it is none other than our Saviour who is being described. It is a lovely picture of our wonderful Lord in His pre-natal glory.'<sup>15</sup>

The purpose of the Book of Proverbs, then, is to impart Wisdom, i.e., God's manner of thinking, to mankind.

### Wisdom in Extrabiblical Literature

It is interesting to note the concept of 'wisdom' in extrabiblical literature. For, even here, 'wisdom' is usually personified. In ENOCH II, 33, wisdom is hypostatized. Jehovah instructs wisdom, on the sixth day of the creation, 'to make man of 7 substances.' And in THE BOOK OF WISDOM, wisdom exacts tribute or judgment from God's throne; and is also the instrument 'by which all things were created.' And in the CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, wisdom is the 'angel' that finds a 'counterpart in the personification of wisdom in the Sapiential books, and in at least one passage (Zachariah 3:1) it seems to stand for that son of man whom Daniel (Daniel 7:13) saw brought before the Ancient of days.'<sup>16</sup>

And 'Wisdom Literature shows many traces of Indian influence. The very word, wisdom, or SOPHIA, seems to be a translation of the term BODHI. At the same time, the trinity idea begins to take root in the Jewish mind, the oldest form of it being moulded after the pattern of the family, which consists of father, mother, and child. The Wisdom books represent the relation of Sophia to God as his spouse and the Messiah as their son. Many Gnostics used the terms Sophia, Pneuma, and Logos as names for the second person of the

<sup>13</sup>Girdlestone, Robert B. Old Testament Synonyms; page 74.

<sup>14</sup>Bullinger, E.W. A Critical Lexicon to the New Testament Greek; page 886.

<sup>15</sup>Wilson, Walter Lewis. Wilson's Dictionary of Bible Types; page 515-16.

<sup>16</sup>Davidson, Gustav. A Dictionary of Angels; page 312.

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Deity, who represented the divine motherhood of the God-man.

But during the first period of the development of the Christian Church, the ideal of a God-mother was abandoned, the Logos was identified with God the Son, who now became the second person of the Trinity; and the name Pneuma or Spirit was alone retained for the third person. the Gnostic Trinity-conception, however, left its trace in the Christian apocrypha, for in 'the Gospel according to the Hebrews' Christ spoke of the Holy Ghost as his mother (HIERON. ADV. PELAG. III., 2.)<sup>17</sup> Here we view the obfuscation that results from misinterpreting 'wisdom' as God, and not as an attribute of God. The few nodes of fact, as presented by Dr. Carus, are made ambiguous mumbo-jumbo by a luminous dust of rumor and tawdry misappropriation. The conclusions drawn by Dr. Carus give breath to scurrilous conjectures.

Indeed, to burnish the sense of tarnish that lays across the panorama of 'wisdom' as presented in the above extrabiblical literature, the following is offered:

CHAKMAH, SOPHIA, or wisdom, is God's Word in the soul of the believer. And the results of 'wisdom' in the soul of the believer are: 1) graciousness; 2) a propensity for an ordered scale of values; 3) the ability to love unconditionally, and personally; 4) true happiness. Indeed, the Incarnate Person of our Lord, in his humanity, had 'wisdom' according to Luke 2:40, 52, and John 1:14. 'And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.' 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.' 'The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

Synonyms for 'wisdom' are: 'light', Psalm 43:3, 119:30, Eph. 5:8,9,14; 'Christ formed in you,' Gal. 4:19; 'the new man,' Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10; 'perfect work,' James 1:4; 'imitators of God,' Eph. 5:1. And by comparing John 1:4 with Philippians 4:4, we may assert that 'wisdom' is necessary for spiritual maturity. Furthermore, two 'spirits' are SINE QUA NON for the attainment of wisdom: God the Holy Spirit, according to I John 2:27, and a human spirit

<sup>17</sup>Carus, Paul. The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil; page 147-8.

(faith in Christ or regeneration), according to Job 32:8, I Cor. 2:12-13, and I John 2:3. And Job 32:8 is worth noting: 'Surely a spirit dwells in mortal man, and Shaddai's breath makes them to understand.'

And in concluding his remarks to Israel at Moab, Moses stated, 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.' (Deut. 29:29, KJV) The 'things which are revealed' consisted of that which Moses had just spoken, along with the first four books of the extant Pentateuch. And the 'secret things' of God concerned wisdom which could be had; a wisdom that concerned the END of God's grace, i.e., that God's grace had 'infinite resources'<sup>18</sup> in and of itself, and these exponential, endless, properties would be revealed when mankind's self-sufficient resources ceased. A full knowledge of the grace of God, then, is only attainable through 'wisdom' or SOPHIA.

The END of the Lord is accomplished only when, through 'wisdom,' mankind understands the power and beauty of grace. And that is this: 'the Lord is very pitiful and tender of mercy.'

### **Prologue and Purpose of the Book Proverbs 1:1-6**

#### **Proverbs 1:1, The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:**

Here, then, is the title and primary author of the book.

#### **Proverbs 1:2, for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight.**

Here is the first purpose of the book: for the attainment of wisdom, CHOKMA, which is knowledge of God, His reasoning, and His ways. And to the Jews CHOKMA was true godliness (piety or virtue) in mankind. 'Discipline' is MUSAR, and refers to 'teaching by discipline under authority,'<sup>19</sup> or 'teaching by correction.'

The clue to understanding the true connotation of MUSAR is found in Deut. 11:2ff., 'Consider the discipline of the Lord your God, his greatness... his signs and his deeds which he did in Egypt to Pharaoh..., and what he did to the army of

<sup>18</sup>Ironsides, H.A. The Mysteries of God; page 8.

<sup>19</sup>Thieme, Robert. Proverbs; from notes, undated.

## Proverbs, 8

Egypt..., and what he did for you in the wilderness.'

In other words, MUSAR is any mechanism by which God reveals Himself to mankind; and Jehovah, the God of the Jews, was forced to reveal Himself to mankind, for no one could invent or imagine such a God -- a God that is not remote, does not have to be pleased by works, and IS perfect Love, Justice, Righteousness, Veracity, and Truth. And not only this, but loves His people so much that He is pictured as the father-figure seated around the kitchen table with his family, admonishing them primarily by 'oral instruction' and, if needed, by 'the rod of correction.'

But even this physical discipline provides a warranty of family relationship, for only fondness and love cause a father to reprimand so that the child might prosper and be blessed. And it should be noted that the concept of MUSAR includes miracles, signs, and wonders, i.e., the Omnipotence of God at the family member's disposal, as methods of instruction.

Thus, God's motivation for all this instruction is love; and the goal? In one word, happiness! Job 5:17, and 36:10,11 confirm this goal: 'Lo! Happy is the man who God (ELOAH, the Living God) corrects; the Almighty's chastening oh! spurn thou not.' 'Thus openeth He their ear, and doth instruct, and warn them from iniquity to turn. Then, if they hearken and obey [his voice: oral instruction] they in prosperity shall spend their days, [and end] their years in peace and pleasantness.'<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, not only is the human family the 'basic unit of authority in life,'<sup>21</sup> but so also it should be understood that God views his saints as 'family,' for their is an intimate, very personal relationship between the believer and God. Indeed, there are eight basic authorities in life: God's Word; God Himself; the Pastor (in the present dispensation); civic rulers; parents; judicial procedure (common law); business (policy and implementation); military; and personal volition.<sup>22</sup> And there are five principles that all members of mankind must learn from either their human parents or from their divine parent, God: respect for legitimate

authority; self-discipline; respect for private property; respect for the privacy of others; respect for the entitlements of others.<sup>23</sup>

Real substance, then, and the valuation of ideals, not irreverence, are the objective of 'instruction.' Thus, engineered environments in which people 'like themselves,' or obtain 'self-esteem,' or 'think whatever they wish' are no substitute for spiritual wisdom. Self-esteem cannot be dispensed, it is earned through self-discipline; and spiritual self-esteem cannot be bestowed, it is learned through self-discipline and the instruction of wisdom.

The second purpose of the Book of Proverbs is found in verse 2b: 'for understanding words of insight.' The Hebrew term for 'understanding is BIN, and the term for 'insight' is BINAH, and the term for 'words' is 'EMER or 'AMER, and is defined as 'what is said; especially of the words of God.'<sup>24</sup> And the entire phrase might be translated 'for discerning what is said of insight,' or 'for distinguishing words of understanding.'

The root BIN is associated with the substantives BAYIN and BINAH; and the 'original meaning of BYN was 'to distinguish, separate,' a meaning that also appears in different nuances in other Semitic languages.'<sup>25</sup> Thus, BIN connotes being able to distinguish between two ideas, i.e., 'good,' which is herein denominated 'doctrine,' and 'evil.' And BINAH is that which is 'the good,' or 'doctrine,' the thoughts of God.

And Robert Thieme and Merrill F. Unger, both consummate Hebrew scholars, sustain this interpretation of the substantive BINAH. Indeed, Dr. Unger states that BINAH 'is to discern between good and evil and choose the good.'<sup>26</sup> Thus, the second purpose of Proverbs is to provide the saints with the capacity to differentiate between right and wrong, between the truth and the untruthful, or good and evil; consequently, to differentiate between what is doctrine (God's truth) and what is propaganda.

**Proverbs 1:3 For acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair.**

<sup>20</sup>Translated by E.W. Bullinger, The Book of Job. Brackets added by Dr. Bullinger.

<sup>21</sup>Thieme, Robert. Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>These eight authorities first cited by Robert Thieme; appended and altered by R.E. Radic.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Wilson, William. Old Testament Word Studies; page 488.

<sup>25</sup>Botterweck and Ringgren, Eds. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament; vol. ii, page 99.

<sup>26</sup>Unger, Merrill F. Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament; vol. i, page 983.



## Proverbs, 9

Here, the Hebrew term for 'acquiring' is LACHACH, which is 'to receive; to be instated in power; or in a possession or heritage.'<sup>27</sup> Here, then, wisdom or knowledge of God's thoughts are described as POWER and HERITAGE. Wisdom, therefore, is the heritage or birthright of God's saints, and it provides might or power. And what power does it provide? The power to act righteously, TSEDEQ, or virtuously toward all mankind and toward God, i.e., a 'MODUS OPERANDI'<sup>28</sup> of life; the power or ability to be honest or just, MISHPAT, to all mankind; and the power to be 'fair,' MESHARIM, which is literally, 'uprightnesses,' toward all mankind. And this last quality, 'fairness,' is the power to seize a personal honor, morality and goodness. Thus, the third purpose of Proverbs is to provide the power of virtue.

### **Proverbs 1:4, For giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young.**

Here is the fourth reason for Proverbs. 'Prudence to the simple;' and the term for 'prudence' is 'ARAM, which is 'something of value; subtlety.'<sup>29</sup> And it is interesting to note that Adam and Eve were dubbed 'naked,' or 'naive,' in Gen. 2:25, and that the serpent, in Gen. 2:26, was named 'subtle,' and that the word is the same in both instances. Thus, wisdom provides 'something of value or subtlety' to the 'simple,' or guileless. And wisdom also provides 'knowledge and discretion to the young;' which is to give the learnedness to think properly, MEZIMMA, which is an ability to discern between that which is honorable or dishonorable, to the 'young,' NA'AR, i.e., those young men and women of around 20 years of age. Thus, Proverbs is for the artless as well as the sagacious.

And once more, it is important to note that such wisdom is potent and that it is the believer's inheritance. In other words, this is the way princes and princesses of God should think, act and behave. For it is incumbent upon royalty, a member of the family of God, to comport oneself appropriately. The 'man of God,' then, is by legacy elite. And this 'privilege' is based upon an understanding that there are inherent limits on human control over life, over tragedy and history.

<sup>27</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 342.

<sup>28</sup>Thieme, Robert. Proverbs; from notes, undated.

<sup>29</sup>Thieme, Robert; Wilson, William. Ibid.

Attitudes toward life are formed upon information, which is herein called 'wisdom.' And a lack of virtue or 'wisdom' leads to petulance, self-righteousness, self-satisfaction and intolerance. This in turn brings about arrogance and insecurity, simultaneously. These are not the attributes of royalty; for this type of thinking is hopelessly shabby, and provincial. And septic arrogance should not be confused with the honor which should be characteristic of the aristocratic, which has its foundation in the above described legacy and upon an obligation or duty to maintain its honor. This is not a self-fabricated eliteness owing its status to its own efforts. For this leads to fundamental ingratitude. Rather, this eliteness is that of NOBLESSE OBLIGE, which is a voluntary acceptance to make a direct and personal assistance to that which is honorable and correct.<sup>30</sup>

### **Proverbs 1:5, Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.**

Here is the fifth purpose of Proverbs: to allow the 'wise,' i.e., those who, because they have some wisdom, crave to learn more. And they (the wise) will 'add to their learning,' YASAPH, JsayA, which means to 'augment, to add to, to increase.'<sup>31</sup> Moreover, those who are 'discerning,' which is the niph'al participle of BIN, will gain 'guidance.' And the term for guidance is a nautical term which means 'steering; the art of steering or guiding'<sup>32</sup> a ship. Thus, figuratively, the term refers to wise counsel or direction. So through wisdom, an individual may give direction to his or her life and decisions.

### **Proverbs 1:6 For understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.**

Here is the sixth purpose of Proverbs: to understand 'proverbs,' MASHAL, and 'parables,' MELISHA, i.e., their interpretation. And the 'sayings and riddles of the wise' refers to the ability to interpret the metaphorical allusions within the written Word ('sayings') of God, and the highly evolved important tenets (the most difficult of doctrines within Scripture), literally, 'the knots,' of God's Word. And this term was used by Samson as he presented his riddle at his

<sup>30</sup>These thoughts on the "elite" and the "aristocracy of God" have been interpolated from Christopher Lasch's book, *The Revolt of the Elites*. And some of his phrases and terminology have been unashamedly borrowed.

<sup>31</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 227.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.; page 98.

## Proverbs, 10

wedding feast in Judges 14:12. "Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to them. "If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes." Likewise, the same word was used to describe the interrogations of Solomon by the Queen of Sheba in I Kings 10:1. "When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions." Thus, wisdom provides the wise person with the capability of understanding and interpreting the most esoteric of God's Truths.

### **Proverbs 1:7 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.'**

Many scholars include verse seven in the Prologue, and they may be correct in so doing. However, this verse would appear to be more of a summation, tenet, postulate or principle of the entire book. For it is the true consensus of Psalm 111:10, which reads, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise."

The two central words of this verse are 'fear' and 'fools.' The term for 'fear' is YARE', and the term for 'fools' is 'AWAL, and the footnote in the NIV reads: "The Hebrew words rendered FOOL in Proverbs, and often elsewhere in the OT denote one who is morally deficient." This fool, then, is not only vapid in the choices he makes, he is also disrespectful of any type of authority, including that of his own free-will.

This individual has a calloused imagination, is unable to grasp subtleties, is untrammelled by sensitivity, is abrupt and insubordinate, is dull, colorless and boring, and is infantile and contentious. This fool, then, lives in a moral vacuum, and seeks only pleasure, new sensations and stimulating experiences.

Here, in verse seven, is an example of the antithetical distich (VIDE SUPRA). And the clear, incontestable truth is stated in the first line: that 'fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.' And the supporting documents are found in the definition of 'fear,' YARE'. Moreover, two of the five general meanings of YARE' are in view herein: 1) fear as a result of danger or terror; 2) fear in the sense of awe or reverence.

The first definition connotes an imagination of a Divine Being and the subsequent anticipation that punishment might be a real, certain repercussion, if indeed God does exist. Here, then, fear is faith: faith, as it were, in a more puissant Being being involved in the affairs of mankind and history. And this connotation of fear is present here in verse seven.

Yet, much more momentous in this particular verse is the second definition: awe or reverence or, perhaps, even better, respect. And respect (or reverence) for God is the result of: parental training, Lev. 19:3; holy places, Lev. 26:2; God Himself as an object of faith, Psalm 112:1; and the name of God, Psalm 86:11; the awe of God's power, Hab. 3:2; and awe in the face of God's manifest power, Job 6:21. And Job 6:21 is interesting to note because it exposes both of the above definitions of fear: "[And thus it is with you]. Ye come to me (or to nothing); ye see a fearful sight; and are dismayed."

The Hebrew reads TIRAU...VATTIRAU, which is 'you see something FEARFUL and FEAR.'<sup>33</sup> And TIRAU...VATTIRAU is an example of a PARONOMASIA, which is a play upon the sounds of words to signal an important, pregnant principle: fear of God ushers in faith in God. In other words, the power of God causes fear, and this fear leads to awe or reverence of God and His power. And inherent in this awe or reverence of God is a knowledge of Who He is, and who the beholder is. For one does not reverence God and wish to do His Will, if one does not apprehend who one is himself in a relationship with God.

And reverence for God induces one to desire to know more about God, or in this specific instance, Jesus Christ as the visible member of the Godhead. This, then, is a desire to capture Christ, to have ownership of all data about Him. And this need to 'capture' Christ 'stimulates interest in doctrine.'<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the actuality that we are to 'capture' Christ is stated in the attendant Church Age words of Hebrews 12:2, which reads, 'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy before him endured the cross, scorning its

<sup>33</sup>Bullinger, E.W. The Book of Job; page 76. The translation is Dr. Bullinger's; the brackets are added by Dr. Bullinger, the parenthetical insertion is added by R.E. Radic from Dr. Bullinger's footnotes on the text.

<sup>34</sup>Thieme, Robert. Proverbs; from notes, undated.

## Proverbs, 11

shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'

And 'fools despise wisdom (knowledge of God; doctrines concerning Him) and discipline.' 'Discipline,' here, is more properly 'instruction' or utilization of the knowledge of God. The Hebrew term for 'despise' is zUB, BUZ, in the kal stem, which 'denotes open contempt, with mockery.'<sup>35</sup> And the primary meaning of the root was 'to kick at, or stomp on.'<sup>36</sup> Thus, those who do not acknowledge God or His supremacy disdain 'wisdom.'

### The Honor of God

The concept, as discussed above, of 'capturing Christ,' or 'ownership of Christ,' or 'occupation with Christ,'<sup>37</sup> demands our attention. And rather than utilizing the formal, exquisite, detailed compilations of either Robert Thieme or Warren Doud, the author will attempt a different tack. The author, for private reasons, prefers to call the Integrity of God<sup>38</sup>, the Honor of God. This Honor of God being defined as God's love, justice, grace, righteousness, veracity, omniscience, and omnipotence.

To the author, 'beholding the Honor of God,' is being 'occupied with Christ.' For when one steps back and intently gazes at God, then one is forced to certain conclusions: if God IS all of the above attributes (love, justice, grace, etc.), then He cannot deny any of these qualities and remain God. Thus, when God says, 'I will never leave you, nor will I forsake you,' this means that God, being veracity, cannot renege upon this statement. And justice and righteousness, of course, stand there also, and they nod in grim agreement.

God cannot deny this statement, nor the one to whom it was made: every believer. And if God has magnified His Word, those things He says or said, above His Person, then this merely accentuates the certainty that God cannot, will not, cannot even

<sup>35</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 119.

<sup>36</sup>Thieme, Robert. Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>The term "occupation with Christ" and its subsequent Doctrine of Occupation with Christ were first used and compiled by Robert Thieme. Indeed, for a meticulous, complete and fastidious dissertation on the concept, the reader is referred to Robert Thieme's doctrine or, of equal merit, Warren Doud's explication of Occupation With Christ.

<sup>38</sup>Again, a term first used by Robert Thieme; indeed, this terminology is most likely more precise, and more theologically correct that the author's.

begin to, deny this statement. For to do so would be a denial of Himself. And that would mean that God IS NOT God.

Furthermore, God being grace, cannot ever turn His back upon this statement because of some sin or action or thought that the believer might have had, is having, or will have. For the idea of grace has no boundaries; for God IS grace. And grace means that the believer could never earn blessing from God, or deserve it, in the first place. So no matter what the believer does, or plans to do, or did, God MUST always, always, always, always, always, AD INFINITUM, take the believer back. Otherwise, God IS NOT God.

And if God cannot lie, then the final statement of our Lord on the Cross, 'It is finished,' has tremendous repercussions. For the Cross and salvation were God doing the MOST for us. In other words, this was the HARDEST thing that God ever had to do. Well, if that, the hardest thing ever, 'is finished,' that means that all the other easier stuff is finished, too; and even more than finished, because it was easier in the first place.

And what were the easier things: blessings, things: girlfriends, wives, husbands, cars, boats, money, jobs, pleasure, love, sex, friends, trips, vacations, muscles, inner-beauty, fame, wealth, ranches, talent, ability, and 'wisdom' so that the believer might see it. In other words, anything that anybody has ever wanted or asked for or desired or prayed for or screamed for. Anything -- even succor in the worst possible conditions and circumstances of life. It has all been accomplished ALREADY. And God cannot remain God and deny it.

Thus, when one stands back and sees this, then one is 'beholding the Honor of God,' and JUST BEGINNING, JUST BEGINNING, to realize what comfort, joy, and inexpressible inner peace is ALREADY ours. All one has to do is 'behold it.' The believer does not have to pray harder, be better, have more faith, do anything; all he has to do is 'see it as it ALREADY IS.' For if God IS, then it IS ALREADY. It cannot be otherwise, or else God IS NOT God. And God IS God, so these things, thoughts, and actions ARE ALREADY.

Once the believer beholds the Honor of God, all fears, worries, hates, etc., disappear. For whatever it takes, God HAS ALREADY DONE IT. And this is why David could 'demand' things, actions and

## Proverbs, 12

spiritual knowledge from God! For David knew that God had promised to 'never leave him or forsake him.' NEVER!!!! And once David realized this, then he could, with a swagger in his step, approach God and DEMAND that God be what He IS: veracity, grace, love, etc. David realized that God could not deny His Word, and thus God could not deny David, for the promise was made to David.

This is why, on Mt. Carmel, Elijah prayed with certain certitude, 'Answer! God. Answer! God.' Elijah demanded an answer from God. He said, 'ANAH, JEHOVAH ELOHIM, ANAH!' In effect, then, Elijah was saying, 'God! Be what you are! Be justice, love, grace, etc.!' Elijah could demand, because God could not deny what He IS. And this is why, when Moses asked God his name, God answered, 'I am that I am.' In other words, God IS what He IS! And He keeps on being It. Therefore, He cannot deny it, or Himself.

And if the believer can see this, then the believer has beheld the Honor of God. And this, ladies and gentlemen, royal priests and royal priestesses, is 'capturing Christ,' or 'ownership of Christ,' or 'occupation with Christ.' The believer has snared God by what He IS. God is trapped by His Own Essence, by that which He IS. And, of course, this is what God intended, because of His love, all along. He wants the believer to 'capture Him.' For this IS His Divine Will.

### The Instructions of David to his son, Solomon

Proverbs 1, verses 8 through 19, introduces the concept of CORRESPONDENCE, which concerns the repetition of subjects within paragraphs rather than within lines. And in this particular paragraph the subject is repeated ALTERNATELY; and this alternation provides the reader with the perception of the symmetry of the passage, and with the true feeling of the passage. And the concept of CORRESPONDENCE was first advanced by Thomas Boys in his TACITA SACRA of 1824.

The ALTERNATING CORRESPONDENCE of verses 8-19 is as follows:

A/ v8. Two-fold exhortation. 'My son...forsake not.'

B/ v9. Reason. 'For they shall be,' etc.

A/ v10-15. Two-fold exhortation. 'My son, if...my son walk not.'

B/ v16-19. Reason. 'For their feet,' etc.<sup>39</sup>

### Proverbs 1:8 'Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.'

The Hebrew term for 'listen' is the kal imperative of SHAMA', which means 'to hear, to listen, to give heed, obey; to hear attentively.'<sup>40</sup> And 'my son' is the usual form of address, the vocative, of a teacher to a pupil in the Jewish Wisdom literature, and also in Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian writings, e.g., Sirach 2:1, 3:1, Tobit 4:4. And in each instance the burden of instruction lies with, first, the family, then the priests and prophets. So spiritual instruction begins at home and is continued within religious confines.

'To your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.' The term for 'forsake' is the kal future of NATASH, which is defined as 'neglect, abandon, reject, put away from one.'<sup>41</sup> And that which is not to be neglected is the 'father's instruction' and the 'mother's teaching,' whose 'teaching' is called TORAH, herein. And the term as used here refers to 'spiritual doctrines,' or 'a course of guidance from above.' The doctrinal teachings of both parents, then, are to be heeded. And it should be noted that often 'mothers' have more scope for instructing young people than do fathers. Thus, women, according to this verse, have a tremendous spiritual responsibility, and based upon observations, have the unique spiritual gift of integrating a proliferation of such information.

Indeed, this fact is made lucid in Deut. 6:4-9: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord your God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and

<sup>39</sup>Bullinger, E.W. Figures of Speech Used in the Bible; page 366. The structure above is a direct quote from Dr. Bullinger.

<sup>40</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 211.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.; page 175.

## Proverbs, 13

on your gates.' Here, then, in a few short verses is the correct manner for raising children.

It is interesting to note that Solomon himself was bankrupt when it came to teaching 'wisdom' to his own son, Rehoboam. For upon the death of Solomon, circa 935 BC, Rehoboam foolishly alienated ten of the tribes of Israel. For Rehoboam took the counsel of his peers and immediately 10 of the 12 tribes renounced their allegiance to him. Israel was thus divided into northern and southern kingdoms.

For Judah, the predominant portion of Benjamin and the Simeonites remained with Rehoboam. Later, Rehoboam, apostate and degenerate, began to worship idols. 'Rehoboam ben-Solomon worshiped ASHIRIM (phallic gods); 'and there were also holy he-whores (QADISHIM) in the land' of Judah. These priests and priestlings, consecrated to Ashir, prostituted themselves in His honor; and all worshipers who had sexual contact with these hierodules absorbed the vital spirit and essence of the divine phallus.

We are told (II Kings 23:7) that special quarters were provided for these 'dog-priests' in the magnificent Temple of Solomon.<sup>42</sup> And eventually, the Egyptian king, Shishak, invaded Judah and captured Jerusalem, looting the Temple and Rehoboam's palace.

### **Proverbs 1:9 'They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.'**

The pronoun 'they' refers back to the 'instruction and teaching' of the father and mother, i.e., 'wisdom.' And it is meaningful to notice that the 'garland' declaims that which will adorn the 'successful male'<sup>43</sup> in the event that he accepts 'wisdom,' and the 'chain' declaims that which will ornament the 'successful female' provided that she acquires 'wisdom.'

The Hebrew term for 'garland' means 'something added: an ornament forming a graceful addition to the head-dress,'<sup>44</sup> 'a crown.'<sup>45</sup> While the term for 'chain' is 'an ornament of the neck, a badge of honor or distinction.'<sup>46</sup> And both of these additions are declared to be composed of 'grace,'

<sup>42</sup>Edwardes, Allen. *Erotica Judaica*; page 85.

<sup>43</sup>Thieme, Robert. *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 297.

<sup>45</sup>Thieme, Robert. *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 71.

CHEN, here is a soul beauty or soul attractiveness, which is engaging to all those who come in contact with it. This, then, would be charisma, glamor, or appeal in the very personality of the one who is caparisoned with it. And the implication is that of attainment or success. Thus, 'wisdom' produces elegance of soul with concomitant prosperity in every facet of life. 'Wisdom' stands out and is apparent to all who see it; for the one adorned with 'wisdom' appears to be wearing precious stones in a world festooned in confetti.

And Genesis 41:42 and Daniel 5:29 relate the outward success that stems from inner grace: 'Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.' 'Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.'

### **Proverbs 1:10 'My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.'**

The term for 'sinners' is CHATA', which designates the wicked in respect to the lengthened series of sinful acts which proceed from them. -- HENGSTENBERG.<sup>47</sup> These, then, are malicious individuals whose dominant trait is a passion to wreak acts of brutality, and this implies a peculiar exaltation of hate. And they attempt to 'entice,' which is the piel or intensive stem of PACHAH, which is rendered 'to persuade, to entice.'<sup>48</sup> Within the context, this is peer pressure, i.e., an appeal to the natural vanity of approval and emotional commitment. And the object of the suasion, 'my son,' is warned not to 'give in.'

And Deut. 13:8 echoes this warning: 'Do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him.' While Psalm 50:17 and 18 state without equivocation that the person devoid of 'wisdom' will consent to such pressure: 'You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you. When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers.'

### **Proverbs 1:11, 'If they say, 'Come along with us; let's lie in wait for someone's blood, let's waylay some harmless soul.'**

<sup>47</sup>Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 395.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*; page 147.

## Proverbs, 14

'To lie in wait for blood' is from the Hebrew word 'ARAB, which means 'to ambush, to lie in wait.' And this is a Hebrew idiom for the use of violence. The connotation is 'many against few,' or 'strength in numbers.' A shameful act. And they ambush 'some harmless soul.' This is some law-abiding, unsuspecting soul that will be savagely battered for the pleasure that it conveys to the odious perpetrators. This, then, is impulsive, reckless violence without compunction; an intractable lust for power through violence and fury. And to consent to this type of inflamed wantonness is to acquiesce to the principle of association or unity as an evasion, a dissipation, an illusion, whose dialectic is that as it strengthens individuals, so it weakens them. This is what Robert Thieme has denominated 'borrowed strength.' To give in to such sensuality is to find oneself irretrievably part of a collectivity with only mass hatred to shape their longings, formulate their values and arrange their thinking.

Jeremiah 5:26 reverberates with this very idea: 'Among my people are wicked men who lie in wait like men who snare birds and like those who set traps to catch men.'

Proverbs 1:12 "Let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit."

The Hebrew term for "swallow" is BALA', here, the kal future; and the root of BALA' is BL', and it is "etymologically certain that the original meaning of BL' was 'to gulp down' or 'to swallow,' lit. 'to snatch with the mouth and to gulp down through the esophagus.'"<sup>49</sup> And when used figuratively, with mankind as its object, the word means to destroy or remove persons quickly so that they are no longer able to be found. Thus, in context, the word refers to murder and rapid removal to an unmarked grave; this is to conceal clues from the authorities. And the picture conveyed is this: that the attack and murder happen so quickly that it appears as if the ground itself has swallowed up the victim. This same term is used in Jonah 2:1 to describe a great fish swallowing the prophet Jonah.

And the word employed for "grave" is SHE'OL, which is defined as "the grave as a state distinguished from the present life; as the

receptacle of the dead."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the term as used by these villains insinuates that there is no God, that there is no after-life, that there is no heaven, that there is no hell, that there is no justice or judgment. To these villains, death is a state of oblivion, a blank. Thus, if no evidence is left, then they have nothing to fear, for the authorities will be deceived and, to their minds, there is no God to dread. And this reading is sustained by the adjective TAMIM, "whole," which means "to complete, to perfect, to be finished."<sup>51</sup> In other words, once the body has vanished the matter will be closed. One more time, this points to the spiritual incoherence and craziness of these ruffians. They have PRESUMED that there is no God and no consequence to their actions.

"Like those who go down to the pit." Here, then, is the summation of the matter as far as the butchers are concerned: Once in the grave, there is only nothing. And if there is only nothing, then SINE QUA NON (an indispensable condition), there is no God, and no judgment to elude. In conclusion, then, these wretches are listless subhuman hominoids in their souls, too preoccupied in depravity to recognize their own stage in dying.

### **Proverbs 1:13, "We will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder."**

And here is the goal of their dark resolves: "things," or spoils. They are, in effect, congratulating themselves on the ease with which they may gain wealth. And this verse speaks bluntly on the state of those without 'wisdom' or faith in God. For the intimation is that apostate mankind's normal state is something near madness; he is at all times balanced on a knife-edge between hysteria and apathy. And only through faith and 'wisdom' may sanity be attained.

### **Proverbs 1:14, "Throw in your lot with us, and we will share a common purse."**

Verse 14 is nothing more than pedantic obfuscation; "you, too, can share in our wealth. Just join us." Here is the recommendation of the crudest of principles: "strength in numbers."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Botterweck, Ringgren, Eds. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament; vol. ii, page 137.

<sup>50</sup>Wilson, William. Old Testament Word Studies; page 199.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.; page 480.

<sup>52</sup>Thieme, Robert. Proverbs. From notes, taken by hand, undated.

## Proverbs, 15

### **Proverbs 1:15, “My son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths.”**

In this verse, the admonition of verse 10 is continued. And the Hebrew term for “paths” is enlightening to note. The term is NATIB, which occurs in the feminine gender herein, and refers to a “well-trodden way.”<sup>53</sup> And when used figuratively, as it is in verse 15, the word designates a trap for the wicked, and as in Psalm 78:50, declares God as clearing the way for his anger to be discharged. So the trap is twofold: first, the unknowing may be charmed into taking the path; second, the path is, in the end, a snare set by the justice of God. Thus, the trap is both physical and moral, in the sense of a ‘way of life and thought.’ And the feminine gender connotes the insidious seduction of the coquette of Proverbs 7:25, “Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.” The picture is one of allurement and attraction.

### **Proverbs 1:16, “For their feet rush into sin, they are swift to shed blood.”**

Verse 16 continues the illustrative image of the “paths” from verse 15. In fact, verse 16 is an example of SYNECHDOCHE OF THE PART, which is “the exchange of one idea for another associated idea.”<sup>54</sup> And herein, the part, i.e., “the feet” are put for the whole, i.e., “the wicked.”

And the feet of the wicked are said to “rush into sin.” And “sin” is evil. This, then, is evil as a way of life, a way of life which is founded upon a system of thought which is inherently wrong. For its reduction to elements includes arrogance and self-sufficiency. This is the “lie” of Satan’s original persuasion of Eve in the garden: “become independent of God; for you can do it on your own, by using your own talents and abilities.” And apostate mankind rushes to this manner of thinking because mankind believes that he should be able to solve his own problems; and mankind is embarrassed and ashamed to admit that he cannot ‘do it’ on his own. And “blood” refers to violence as a MODUS OPERANDI (manner of working), a way of accomplishing the immediate end. For violence is viewed by apostate mankind as an accretion of power. And this lust for self-

<sup>53</sup>Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament; vol. ii, page 607.

<sup>54</sup>Bullinger, E.W. Figures of Speech Used in the Bible; page 613.

empowerment is typical of the apostate mentality: formless, chaotic, devious.

### **Proverbs 1:17, “How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds!”**

The Hebrew term for “net” is RESET, which is “a net for taking prey.”<sup>55</sup> In other words, even birds can see that the bait is part of a trap, and they avoid the net. For the bird looks past the bait and discerns the net, too. If the bird focuses on the bait, then he is caught. In a like manner, ‘wisdom’ warns mankind of the trap of violence and murder and easy plunder. Thus, to commit acts of carnage in full view of God invites only judgment.

### **Proverbs 1:18,19, “These men lie in wait for their own blood; they waylay only themselves! Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.”**

The Hebrew word for “waylay” is TSAPAN, which means “to hide, to lurk secretly.” These wicked men, then, hide themselves to ambush the innocent (Prov. 1:11), but in the end their own lives will be forfeit. For Jeremiah 16:17 states, “My eyes are on all their ways, they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes.” Here is the definite statement of God’s existence; a statement which the wicked have denied. They cannot hide themselves from God.

And the Hebrew term for “end” is ‘ORACH, and most often ‘ORACH is used in a figurative way, describing the way to life or death.”<sup>56</sup> And the intimation is that mankind must make a choice, either God’s way or the way of evil. For mankind makes his own choices but mankind cannot choose his own end result. And according to Job 16:22 and Job 8:13, the end of all who deny God and His way is peculiar to their deeds, and is not the unjust demand of a penalty. In other words, violent acts conspire with a violent environment to cause the violent end of those who are violent. These men, then, choose to destroy themselves, God does not have to intervene. For violence leads to violence.

Job 8:13 clarifies this ‘road of no return.’ For these brutal men have chosen death as a way of life, thus death is their lot. And this lot/death is both physical and spiritual. “So is the end of all who God forget; so perisheth the hope of godless men.” And the term for God here in Job 8:13 is EL, which

<sup>55</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 286.

<sup>56</sup>Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. Ibid.; vol. i, page 71.

## Proverbs, 16

designates God as the OMNIPOTENT ONE. This is the power of God in carrying out His work.

It should be noted that verse 19 encapsulates and summarizes the end of all who are excessively greedy and violent. II Peter 2:3 says, "Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping."

### Violence

It is important to note that those who utilize violence have been "captured by arrogance,"<sup>57</sup> i.e., they are impressed by their own power and self-sufficiency, and they are "controlled by hatred,"<sup>58</sup> i.e., hatred as an emotion forms the basis of their thought patterns. And since emotions contain no ratiocinative processes, fury becomes the curious analogue (definition) of thought.

Too, it is engaging to note that Satan himself, the architect of arrogance and hatred, is the SUI GENERIS (one of a kind), i.e., the distinctive character of violence. For in the First Woe of Revelation 8:13, which is the fifth trumpet of Rev. 9:1-12, Satan (the "star" of Rev. 9:1) himself is cast to the earth, and in his rage and frenzy he attacks his own entourage of apostate unbelievers. "They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their forehead." (Rev. 9:4) Thus, Satan uses violence to assault his own people. And this act delineates the atmosphere of violence begetting violence.

And from this conclusions may be postulated: arrogance and hatred, i.e., the perpetrators of violence, are unmindful and abusive. For in Revelation 9, Satan's servants are just as their master, arrogant. Thus, arrogance is never allegiant to arrogance. For arrogance has no honesty or honor. Indeed, arrogance is dishonesty in the extreme, since it is the worship of self. Thus, Satan violently discards his associates.

Violence is the misuse of power. And the lust for power is solipsistic, and competes with the collectivity for gratification. Just as arrogance manipulates people for its own ends, so also violence (lust for power) crushes those who stand in its path. And violence and arrogance have no self-imposed limitations, i.e., they don't know when to cease. For cessation would imply self-

discipline and more, self-control. And self-control is humility, the direct opposite of arrogance.

Arrogance and hatred, then, utilize violence as a means to justify and gain their end, which is power and self-gratification. And the procedure that arrogance and hatred utilize to lure those devoid of 'wisdom' into their environment is so simple as to defy imagination: words, simple dialogue.

### Applying Wisdom

Before the next section of Proverbs, that which personifies 'wisdom,' is examined, we should note the underlying principle of Proverbs, which is the application of 'wisdom.' For as my wife used to say, "That's very interesting information, but what does it DO for me." This will now be discussed.

Proverbs chapter 3, verses 5-8, state the case clearly: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones."

The book of Proverbs describes the wise man and the result of his wisdom. And I would like to underline the fact that it describes him. That is, the book of Proverbs does not pester us to be wise, but stands back and says look at the wise man. Proverbs, then, is a photograph of a wise man.

Proverbs tells us that the wise man has a spirit that dances with God. In fact, it says that as far as your mind and emotions are concerned, you will have a merry heart. And Proverbs states that a merry heart does one good like medicine. And Proverbs often speaks of your body as being healed because you have walked in the ways of wisdom. Thus, you can have a healed spirit and a healed mind, and healed emotions from wisdom. The entire body can be healed from the inside, is what 'wisdom' says.

All the way through Proverbs the difference between the wise man and the foolish man is described. And that difference is that the fool thinks that he is number one. That he knows it all. But on the other hand the wise man knows that he knows nothing. The fool believes he knows everything -- "he knows doesn't he? He's number one!" Whereas the wise man is the first to tell you that he knows nothing.

<sup>57</sup>Thieme, Robert. From handwritten notes, undated, untitled.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.



## Proverbs, 17

So we have two men: one who knows everything, or thinks that he does. And the other that knows that he knows nothing.

Genesis 3:5 gives us the invitation of the devil, or the call to what the world sees as wisdom; "And you will be like God." Now wait a minute! Why doesn't Satan say that you will be like me? He said you will be like God. For this is exactly what Satan wants to be, and he so declares this in the five "I wills" of Isaiah. So the devil invited man to hold center stage, like God does. Thus, the devil said, "That if you disobey God, you will hold center stage and be the star of the show, just like God is. And God is all wise, and this tree, if you eat of it, will make you wise, too." That is, you will be able to plan your own life, you can set your own goals, you will know where you are going and you will be able to get there! And any method you choose will be the correct one. You are wise. Of course, you're wise. You are number one. You must be right.

So mankind says, "I am right. And I'll kill anybody who doesn't think so." I'm right! And man goes around constantly trying to prove that he is right. Some more than others. "I'm right, I'm center stage -- the devil promised me. He promised me I'd be like God, and God is always right isn't he? Well, then, I'm always right." And on many occasions "God is wrong and I'm right. I had to steal and kill in this situation because I had to -- because I'm right."

So mankind goes on trying to establish that he is right. Proverbs 18:2 says, "A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions." So don't try to tell a fool anything. And on this pathway of establishing that he is right, the fool has no sensation of guilt. For the beginning of sin does not carry with it the sensation of guilt. Rather, as the fool walks along the pathway of sin he has a feeling of expansion, of power, of sagacity. "I have it together, not like all these dopes around me." Later, when sin has gone to great extremes, then guilt enters. But in the beginning he's made the grand decision in his own mind: "You're right -- you're God." This is why Scripture speaks of the person living in an "illusion." He believes that he is always right. And this is nonsense. For he lives in a universe that is only as big as himself.

And in establishing that he is right, he loses his temper. He loses his temper because he knows that he is right, but these idiots around him don't. So he has to establish the fact that he is right. And there are other ways of doing it: sneaking sarcasm, and that certain type of teasing that is just anger waiting to come out. And it is right that the person who is right gets even; so out comes revenge! And in Proverbs the fool is called, too, the angry man. Mankind shrugs it off, though, and says, "Well, I have a bad temper." But Scripture says that if you have a bad temper, you are a fool.

And the best way of making oneself right is to make others look wrong. We learn this when we are children playing on see-saws. When we're up, the others are down. So out come the rumors, the slander, the gossip. For as long as they look bad, that inevitably makes them look good.

Or the person who is easily hurt -- the SENSITIVE person. This person takes everything the wrong way. Why? Because this person thinks he is number one. They can't say things about me, I'm number one!

This is where the basic foundation of 'wisdom,' as it is presented in Proverbs, comes in. "Do not lean on your own understanding. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool."

The first characteristic of the wise man, then, is humility. Matthew 5:3 says, "Blessed are the spiritually bankrupt, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And here our Lord is stating that you can never TRY to be humble. For trying to be humble brings out that nasal twang in people's voices, "I'm no good. I'm a loser." And then there are those who hate themselves and are always putting themselves down. They despise themselves and they think that this is humility.

On the contrary, true humility is quite immodest. But misguided pride is always looking for praise. People lie in the name of humility. They say they can't do something well because they don't want to appear proud; but everyone knows that they can do it, and very well at that. In truth, being humble is not having an inferiority complex. HUMILITY IS NOT THINKING YOU ARE SOMEBODY BECAUSE YOU ACT AS IF YOU ARE NOBODY! This person is proud and arrogant.

## Proverbs, 18

The Pharisees took this 'acting as if they were nobody' to its pinnacle. And within the Pharisees there were 7-10 different subgroups. One group was called "the shufflers," for they always had their heads down and they shuffled along. And this group was sometimes called the "bleeding Pharisees," because they held their heads down to prove they were humble, and they kept banging into things. And the Sadducees called one group of the Pharisees the "ones who have done everything." For as they shuffled along, they would repeat to themselves, "I have done everything, because I want to please God so much." This is the Pharisee that Christ admonished as "praying to himself;" in other words, Christ said this man was praying to HIMSELF, for he thought HE was God.

And Christ taught that greatness is not location. For He said that if they call you from the back of the room to sit higher, go. No false modesty.

Humility is not poverty of mind. Some people never exercise their minds, they say, "I'm so humble, I just don't understand this." This is not humility, this is laziness. Or the man who lives in a cardboard box under the bridge because he refuses to work. Being poor is not humility. The poverty that our Lord spoke of was a poverty of spirit. In other words, I realize that in my spirit I have nothing apart from God. Just as a beggar doesn't have to pray to be shown that he has nothing, he knows it.

Thus, humility is not attained. Mankind is bankrupt in spirit. God made them that way. There is no sin associated with it. Humility is knowing who you are -- simply seeing the way you were made. God made mankind insolvent on the inside so that He could fill up the deficiency. So when mankind thinks he can do it by himself, he is shutting God out.

This is like meeting a person in an asylum who thinks that he is Napoleon. It is pitiful. When one meets a sinner who really believes that he can handle life, that he is independent, this, too, is pitiful. For this person really thinks that he is God.

God tells us that we are nothing without Him. Proverbs tells us that when we realize that we have nothing in and of ourselves, then we are wise or spiritually mature. And once mankind sees this, he has seen his normal state. Without Christ mankind can do nothing.

So the beginning of all wisdom is to see oneself before God as a creature, a redeemed creature, but that is all, just a creature that is dependent on his Creator for everything, including thought.<sup>59</sup>

### Review

As the personification of 'wisdom' is about to be studied, it is important to recall a few key facts concerning 'wisdom.' For within the book of Proverbs two rudimentary communities or groups are expounded upon: the foolish man, and the 'wise' man. And it is to be comprehended that 'wisdom' is the proper objective out of all the available candidates. In other words, one and only one candidate is absolutely correct. And this exactitude embodies correct methods as well as correct ends.

It is also to be comprehended that God IS 'wisdom.' He does not possess it, He IS it. And God chose what shall be out of all the possibilities. And the end? The intent or end is God Himself. For God being God, and there being no other surpassing Him, He must necessarily be His own end. Wisdom, then, may be reasonably declared to be God's glory and His joy in His creation.

Furthermore, the 'fool' is to be understood as a 'moral fool,' one who has rejected God and His 'wisdom.' The fool in Proverbs, then, is not an intellectual fool. For the fool makes his own happiness his own end, but he cannot provide this happiness for himself.

Therefore, 'wisdom' is not a catalogue of regulations; 'wisdom,' as presented in Proverbs and in its personification, is tantamount to a personage, a thought, that enters into the individual's soul and human spirit. It is, then, a capacity within an individual. Thus, 'wisdom' is realizing that one is a fool without God. For an individual, with his own abilities and endowments, may in no way 'become' wise, but the individual may ACTIVELY CHOOSE to take possession of God's wisdom. And once embraced, 'wisdom' displays itself like the 'crown' and 'jeweled necklace' of Proverbs 1:9; 'wisdom,' then, becomes as obvious as a exotic intonation -- it stands out from the banal.

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<sup>59</sup>The above dissertation on the 'use of 'wisdom'' has been unashamedly paraphrased and, in certain instances, openly adopted from Bishop Smith. From notes, handwritten, undated.

## Proverbs, 19

### Personification

PERSONIFICATION is 'a figure by which things are represented or spoken of as persons; or, by which we attribute intelligence, by words or actions, to inanimate objects or abstract ideas. The Latins called it PERSONIFICATIO, or PERSONAE FICTIO, THE MAKING or FEIGNING OF A PERSON. Also, CONFORMATIO, A CONFORMING or FASHIONING, DELINEATION, CONCEPTION.'<sup>60</sup> In the following verses, then, 'wisdom' is represented as a person.

#### **Proverbs 1:20, 'Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares.'**

The Hebrew term for 'calls aloud' is the kal future of RANAN, which means 'to give forth the voice with vehemence, either in joy or sorrow.'<sup>61</sup> And the word as used herein denotes supplication, i.e., 'wisdom' beseeches her hearers to listen and heed her words. For through her is the portal to true happiness. Moreover, this is an indirect reference to the prophets who will, in the future, stand in the streets and proclaim God's word to the people. And the term for 'streets' in this verse and verse 21 is RECHOB, and the word refers to public areas or open auditoriums where public gatherings took place. Thus, it is evident that 'wisdom' or God's word was readily available to any and all that would listen.

#### **Proverbs 1:21, 'At the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech.'**

In this verse, 'wisdom' personified as a woman 'makes her speech in the gates of the city.' And the Hebrew word for 'gates' is SHA'AR, which is defined as the main gate of a city in the ancient world. And depending upon the size of the respective city, each city might have any number of gates, but always one main gate. The doors of this gate were usually composed of wood, customarily covered with metal, and the doors were secured with bars. 'The city gate was extremely important in the life of the people, for social, administrative, and business intercourse took place here.'<sup>62</sup> It was here, at the main gate of

the city, that the king and his administrators sat to administer justice, according to Deut. 21:19 and Joshua 20:4. And according to II Samuel 15:2, it was here, at the main gate, that Absalom engaged the plaintiffs and defendants of the judicial system; and in dialogue with them, he prepared the way for his revolt. Proverbs 22:22 and Amos 5:15 confirm the fact that the administration of justice occurred 'at the gate.'

In addition, business transactions took place at the gates, and according to II Kings 7:1, Jer. 17:19-20, 36:10, and I Kings 22:10, it was at the gates that the prophets generally addressed the people. Indeed, II Samuel 18:24 speaks of a platform above the gate, and it was here that public orations were made.

The implication is that 'wisdom' made her voice constantly heard at the gate of the city. Again, opportunity existed to listen, to learn, and to adopt 'wisdom' as a method of thought.

#### **Proverbs 1:22, 'How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?'**

The verse is introduced by an interrogative, 'how long?' In other words, how long will the people continue to rebuff God's word, and God? And the word for 'simple' is PETI, which is quite simply, 'stupid.' But not the stupid in an intellectual sense, but the stubbornly stupid in a moral, solipsistic sense. And these stupid ones, along with the LESHIM ('those who ridicule') and the KESILIM ('fools') persist in rejecting the Lady 'wisdom,' or God's word. The implication is that these stupid ones are not merely spiritually immature, rather they are otherwise engrossed in the pleasures of life; the mockers have no use for 'wisdom,' for they sneer at her; and the fools are said to 'hate' her, i.e., they love themselves and their own thoughts -- they are number one, they are right! These, then, are all lost in a sink of uncertainty and error. In today's parlance, they are the 'aesthetes,' and they seek only self-satisfaction through the physical senses, physical beauty, erotic excitement, through success in any of its forms. And in reality there is nothing improper in any of these 'things' in and of themselves; it is when they achieve precedence and become the origin of happiness that they become incompatible with life. Pleasures may be delighted in, but they are not happiness;

<sup>60</sup>Bullinger, E.W. Figures of Speech Used in the Bible; page 861.

<sup>61</sup>Wilson, William. Old Testament Word Studies; page 104.

<sup>62</sup>Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament; vol. ii, page 945.

## Proverbs, 20

for if they are removed, then happiness ceases to exist. And this is nonsensical.

These people are solipsistic as concerns God, and 'solipsism is the insane belief that only one's self exist. All other parts of the universe, including other people, are unsubstantial figments in the mind of the single person who alone is truly real. It is almost the same as thinking one is God, and so far as I know, there has never been an authentic solipsist outside a mental institution or who in the past was not considered mad.'<sup>63</sup> And Miguel de Unamuno relates the following in his TRAGIC SENSE OF LIFE: 'What would a universe be without any consciousness capable of reflecting it and knowing it? What would objectified reason be without will and feeling? For us it would be equivalent to nothing -- a thousand times more dreadful than nothing....It is not, therefore, rational necessity, but vital anguish that impels us to believe in God.'<sup>64</sup>

The simple, the mockers, the fools, they all are seeking the illusion that they can escape the void within, that bleak anonymity of life. There is nothing they don't WANT. They WANT this, and that, they WANT everything! And this is nothing more than impulse gratification, and it is more, it is evil propaganda. For this evil propaganda makes failure and deprivation of 'everything' unbearable. Thus, the ordinary human being discovers that he is empty and insignificant, and he cannot endure the prospect. And the inevitable result is an even more frenzied quest for meaning and purpose, and includes an attempt at living 'vicariously' through others.

But the end result is a paucity of self-esteem, lack of a role in life, and loss of personality, if one ever existed. Pitiably, then, these people never know 'who they are.' And any brief moment of what might be termed happiness cannot arrest or erase the inner vacancy of existence. Life has no meaning, no happiness, no purpose, no reason for such as these. And as their search proceeds it takes on every guise of licentiousness, immorality, crime, and abuse.

**Proverbs 1:23, 'If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you.'**

<sup>63</sup>Gardener, Martin. The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener; page 11.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.;page 16.

The Hebrew word for 'responded' is SHUB, in the kal future, and the word means 'to turn back, to return, to turn from, to cease from.'<sup>65</sup> SHUB may reasonably be translated as 'to repent,' i.e., to change one's mind and turn from one thing to another. And the term for 'rebuke' is TOKACHAT, which is from YAKACH, and YAKACH is used forensically in covenant lawsuits. In other words, this term is not used except in reference to those with whom God has entered into covenant. This, then, is 'wisdom' as the plaintiff, condemning the Jews for their rejection of her advancements. And the term does not just simply expose sin, but is theofugal, which points to a change of mind about God and 'wisdom.' And YAKACH 'denotes education and discipline as a result of God's judicial actions.'<sup>66</sup>

NABA', is the Hebrew term for 'pour out,' and the word is 'used emphatically of God's pouring forth his spirit in rich profusion and continued fulness, as a well-spring of wisdom.'<sup>67</sup> And that which would have been poured out is HaUr, RUACH, which should be rendered 'spirit,' and not 'heart.' However, 'heart' is not erroneous if the full meaning of the figure is understood. For 'spirit,' here, is put by METONYMY OF CAUSE for that which is given, i.e., spiritual knowledge or 'wisdom,' rather than by whom it is given, i.e., God the Holy Spirit. So this is the gift, not the Giver. In other words, the instrument is put for that which is effected, spiritual knowledge. And in John chapter 7, verses 38 and 39, our Lord spoke of this 'gift,' for He said that 'out of the belly' of the believer should flow 'living water.' And 'belly' is put by METONYMY for the inner parts of the soul of mankind, i.e., mind, heart, thoughts.

Thus, 'the thoughts' of 'wisdom' would have been 'made known' to them, if they had heeded her plea to 'turn back' to God. But, of course, they did not. And this is the reality.

### Covenant

The concept of 'covenant' should be briefly discussed. The Hebrew word is BERITH, 'to eat, dine,' and it denotes the ceremonial meal that accompanied the covenantal ceremony. And this is the reason behind all of the ceremonial eating that occurs in the Bible.

<sup>65</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 458.

<sup>66</sup>Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. Ibid.; vol. i, page 376.

<sup>67</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 320.

## Proverbs, 21

BERITH refers to a 'favorable disposition' from God to mankind. It is not a mutual agreement. And this is sustained by the phrase TSIVVAH BERITHO, 'he has commanded his covenant,' which phrase is found in both Psalm 111:9 and Judges 2:20. This phrase, TSIVVAH BERITHO, connotes no mutual dependence. Thus, BERITH may be thought of as a pledge or assurance on the part of God to his chosen people in the Old Testament. And BERITH as a commitment has to be validated by an oath. And in the Old Testament, God validated His commitment by an oath upon Himself, for there is nothing greater that He could swear upon. And God swore that He would die rather than break His oath. Since, however, God IS eternal life, and does not merely HAVE life, in effect, His oath cannot ever be broken. It is eternal just as God is eternal. And this is, again, confirmed in Psalm 89:35 in the phrase, 'I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips.'

In the Old Testament, covenants between God and man were ratified by sacrifices, 'OLOTH USHELAMIM, 'burnt offerings and peace offerings,' from which sacrifices the blood was divided into two parts: half the blood was thrown upon the altar, and the other half was sprinkled upon the people. Whereas in covenants between man and man, covenantal meals ratified the covenant. Also, salt, BERITH MELACH, 'a covenant of salt,' or FOEDUS SALITUM, 'covenant of salt,' in the Latin. Other ceremonies between man and man also signified ratification: libations, e.g. Isa. 30:1, NESOKH MASSEKHAH, 'to pour out a libation;' the exchange of articles of clothing, as in I Sam. 18:3; circumcision signified covenant, between God and Abraham, 'OTH BERITH, 'sign of the covenant.'

On God's part the covenant is always unconditional, as is demonstrated in II Sam.7:13-15, 'I will establish the throne of his (David) kingdom for ever...When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him...but I will not take my steadfast love from him.' Therefore, all God's covenants are deliberately valid forever, 'ADH 'OLAM; and even when the Jews broke the covenant and went 'after false gods,' and were disciplined by God for their unfaithfulness, the covenant was not abrogated. This is made clear in Lev. 26:44, where God intercedes because He 'will not break his covenant,' even though the Jews had been false.

And it is worth noting that 'the idea of a covenant between a deity and a people is unknown to us from other religions and cultures.'<sup>68</sup> And this is why the relationship between God and Israel is portrayed as one between an husband and wife.

And although there is no 'covenant' PER SE ("intrinsically", 'by or in itself') between the Church and God, our Lord made mention of the New Covenant to Israel when He instituted the Holy Eucharist in Luke 22:20. And this reference denotes that procurement of relationship with God is the same, always: belief in Christ. Moreover, the Church has a 'greater covenant,' as it were, in the fact that the Church has the Holy Spirit and is IN Christ, as He is IN the saints. Thus, the Church has an even more real and more intimate relationship with God, for the Church is adopted INTO the Royal Family of God through union with Christ. Therefore, the Church's relationship is not that of covenant, it is more, much more, it is that of Family. For families are legally bound without contracts or covenants, and even disinheritance does not break the family tie. Thus, the Church Age saint cannot be denied his familial rights.

Thus, the Holy Eucharist or the Lord's Table is a SYMBOL of this new familial, personal, intimate relationship with God through Christ. So when the Church Age believer partakes of the elements he is commemorating, through the ceremonial 'meal,' this superior relationship with God.

The only other ceremony, in today's world, that sustains this covenant process is the marriage ceremony. For here each party is solemnly swearing that he/she will die before breaking the covenant. This explains the ring that the woman wears; it is continuous and so is the relationship now being entered into. And the marriage reception or dinner afterward is the 'meal' that ratifies the new relationship.

Sadly, of course, at the present juncture this ceremony is not understood, or if it is, is quickly abrogated; and this is because mankind is breakable and frail and, God, being aware of this, has set down legitimate and illegitimate laws concerning divorce and the right to re-marriage.

**Proverbs 1:24,25 'But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I**

<sup>68</sup>Botterweck, Ringgren, Eds. Ibid.; vol. ii, page 278.

## Proverbs, 22

**stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke.'**

In these verses we have both the 'call' to turn (the word) and the gesture of plea or offer of help, 'when I stretched out my hand.' And since 'wisdom' is here the Spirit of wisdom, God the Holy Spirit, God is in actuality doing the 'calling' to turn and reaching out a pleading 'hand.' These, then, have achieved 'the full measure' (Gen. 15:16) and have displayed the utmost folly in rejecting God. Thus, God has no recourse, He will do four things, which four things are delineated in verses 26 through 33. And it is to be remembered that these four things are the direct result of mankind's free-will and self-sufficiency.

In anticipation, the four things that God will do, are:

1. He will 'laugh' at their ruin, Psalm 2:4, Prov. 6:15, 10:24.
2. He will 'turn a deaf ear' to their cries for help, I Sam. 8:18, Job 27:9, Psalm 18:41, Isa. 1:15, Jer. 11:11, Ezek. 8:18, and Micah 3:4.
3. He will punish them with their own perversities, Job 4:8, Prov. 5:22-23, Jer. 6:19, cf. Prov. 14:14.
4. He will deliver those who heed His word, Psalm 25:12-13, Prov. 3:24-26.

**Proverbs 1:26,27, 'I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you -- when calamity (ruin) overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and troubles overwhelm you.'**

It should be noted that the Hebrew future tense, here, and in the preceding verses, denotes certainty and reality, the certainty and reality of disaster from self-sufficiency. From God's perspective this future tense denotes single, distinct acts which have been chosen, and thus are done and passed; and the preterite tense (past) may be validly expected.

SACHAQ, is the Hebrew term for 'laugh,' and on the surface appears cruel and cold. Yet, it is not. For here 'wisdom' is laughing in open-mouthed wonder at such arrogant, stubborn, obtuseness. She is amazed at the egregious self-indulgence that denies God and His word and His thoughts. True happiness, success, and prosperity have been

proffered; and their contemptuous derogation is beyond comprehension. Thus, this personified noblewoman, 'wisdom,' 'laughs,' in effect, to preserve her sanity.<sup>69</sup>

**Proverbs 1:28-30, 'Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke.'**

In these verses God will not hear the cry for help (I Sam. 8:18, Job 27:9, Psalm 18:41, Isa. 1:15, Jer. 11:11, Micah 3:4). And Job 27:8,9 lucidly describes God's deafness with regard to those who will not respond to His word and His love. 'For, what hope hath the godless man, or gain? When once Eloah doth demand his life will God (EL) [indeed] give ear unto his cry when distress shall come on him?' And ELOAH is the God who is to be WORSHIPPED AND REVERENCE, the LIVING GOD, the God who IS. But these self-sufficient ones have denied that He is the living God. The result? They cry to Him for help, but they know nothing about Him, they do not know HOW to pray, and more, they do not recognize Him as God through faith; they merely want relief from their misery.

And He will 'hide himself' from them, for they do not seek Him, they seek succor. And Proverbs 8:17 states God's attitude to those who seek Him: 'I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.' The implication, then, is that if they would first seek Him, then they would find Him. But they do not; they seek deliverance from their state of affairs, from their predicament. They have 'spurned my ('wisdom's') rebuke;' in other words, they have opposed the truth and the tender advances of the Spirit. Job 21:4 says, 'Ah me! Do I make my appeal to man? (And yes, He does!) Might I not in that case impatient be?' Here, then, God's interminable forbearance has proven them hollow with regard to Himself.

**Proverbs 1:31, 'They will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.'**

Since they have not eaten the 'meal' of God's covenant, they will 'eat the fruit of their ways.' And the Hebrew term for 'eat' is the kal future of

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<sup>69</sup>The idea of "sanity" here is taken from the scholarship of Robert Thieme, Proverbs; from notes, undated.

## Proverbs, 23

'AKAL, which means 'to eat, to consume.'<sup>70</sup> The word means, then, to 'eat' in the sense of accepting readily into the human soul. In other words, those who reject 'wisdom' will eat or depend upon their own self-sufficiency, and depend upon that which is in their souls, i.e., the pursuit of pleasure and 'things,' for their succor.

For these do not have JEHOVAH JIREH, 'the God who sees and provides,' in their souls; they cannot see Him who sees them. Instead they will have only envy, jealousy, and hatred to provide for them. In essence, then, 'hatred' and 'arrogance' must provide happiness and deliverance for them. 'Pleasure,' at this point, is their great dividend -- this will be all they have to show for their 'ways.' And if 'pleasure' is all there is, then life has no meaning. Because the fruit of 'pleasure' and 'hatred' is vulgarity (lightlessness) and misery. Therefore, let vulgarity and misery succor them.

**Proverbs 1:32, 'For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.'**

The Hebrew term for 'waywardness' is the word for 'apostasy,' MESHUBA, which is defined as 'backsliding, disloyalty, faithlessness.' And the word indicates a 'way of life,' and refers to 'faithlessness to the covenant or relationship that God has offered.' The implication, then, is that if they had 'turned to God,' i.e., believed in Him, then 'I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.' (Hosea 14:4)

And the Hebrew term for 'kill' is the kal future of HARAG, which means 'to slay, as enemies in battle.'<sup>71</sup> This, then, is judicial execution implemented by God Himself. Their very 'complacency,' or 'security (SHALAH)' will 'destroy' them. And the 'security' of 'fools' lies in their own thoughts, their own self-sufficiency. This same 'security' will now prove false. Sadly, they cannot provide for themselves.

**Proverbs 1:33, 'But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.'**

Once again, God is gracious. If they will only seek Him. At this point, a 'new responsibility springs

from his new relationship.'<sup>72</sup> And the Hebrew term for 'fear' is PACHAD, which is 'fear or terror'<sup>73</sup> in the sense of 'the immediacy of the object of terror,'<sup>74</sup> which is, here, God's perfect justice. Those, then, who have heeded 'wisdom's' plea, and have 'eaten' or dined on God's word, will be 'at ease' and fear no harm. Indeed, they will be prosperous and successful in every facet of life. For Psalm 25, verses 12 and 13, state, 'Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him. He will spend his days in prosperity.'

### Choices

It should be noted that the underlying principle throughout the above passages is found in verse 29, 'choose.' The word is BACHAR, which is 'to choose, select, prefer'; and that which is mostly implied in choice, to examine, to explore. There is a fulness in this word, which includes all these ideas.'<sup>75</sup> This is simply, the free-will of mankind, the privilege of making a choice. And God first 'chose' mankind and sent His Son as a manifestation of His choice, and His love for mankind. For Vriezen wrote: 'In the Old Testament the choice is always the action of God, of his grace, and always contains a mission for man; and only out of this mission can man comprehend the choice of God.'<sup>76</sup>

This, then, is the assurance, from God Himself, of guaranteed free-will in mankind; and this guarantee includes a relationship to the throne of God through the altar of the Cross.

'For Yahweh has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation: 'This is my resting place for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.'" (Psalm 131:13f.) Thus, God has 'desired' all this: the free-will of mankind, and a relationship with mankind. This is God's 'desire.' And all that is required to enter His rest is a CHOICE. And the concept of covenant (VIDE SUPRA) describes the action of God in 'choosing' mankind and Israel.

Dr. Merrill F. Unger has entitled chapter two of Proverbs, "The Second Lesson on Wisdom -- Its

<sup>70</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 141.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.; page 398.

<sup>72</sup>Ironside, H.A. Notes on Proverbs; page 26.

<sup>73</sup>Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. Ibid.; vol. ii, page 721.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Wilson, William. Ibid.; page 76.

<sup>76</sup>Botterweck, Ringgren, Eds. Ibid.; vol. ii, page 87.

## Proverbs, 24

Benefits. 2:1-22."<sup>77</sup> And Dr. H.A. Ironside says of chapter two, verses 1-5, "In the opening verses the secret that so many have sought in vain is made known: how to find the knowledge of God. After all, there is very little mystery about it. It is condition of soul, rather than a well-furnished mind, that is required."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Unger, Merrill F. Commentary on the Old Testament; vol. i, page 986.

<sup>78</sup>Ironside, H.A. Proverbs; page 28.

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