

Title: **PROVERBS**
 CHRIST THE WISDOM OF GOD
Text: Proverbs 1:7
Subject: *The Message of Proverbs*
Introduction:

The Poetic Books set before us essential and blessed aspects of life in Christ as it is experienced by God's saints in this world.

- **Job** displays the necessity of self-denial, of dying to self, that we may live unto God.
- The **Psalms** set before us the blessedness of worshipping our God in resurrection life.
- **Ecclesiastes** displays the utter vanity of all earthly things, the complete inability of finding satisfaction for our souls in this perishing world of woe.
- The **Song of Solomon** displays Christ as that One in whom alone our souls find satisfaction.
- **Lamentations** teaches us to set our hearts upon our God and Savior, finding contentment and satisfaction in him.
- **Proverbs** shows us the blessed wisdom of faith in Christ, wisdom with which to live for God's glory in this present evil world.

Tonight we will look at the Book of Proverbs. The first nine chapters of this Book are instructions by Solomon to his son—a series of parental admonitions his son to seek wisdom and shun folly.—But there is more here than

Solomon's instructions to his son. **We have before us God's instructions to his sons and daughters, teaching us to seek wisdom and shun folly.** In the remaining chapters (10-31), we are given 374 proverbs that touch every phase of life in this world.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Book is set before us in the opening verses of chapter one.

(Proverbs 1:1-6) "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; {2} To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; {3} To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; {4} To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. {5} A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: {6} To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."

WISDOM

The Key to the Book is found in verse seven. Here we are told plainly what wisdom is.

(Proverbs 1:7) "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction."

There are many books written by men to teach wisdom. The thing that sets this Book apart from all others is that it does not teach us about wisdom. It teaches us wisdom.

It teaches and reveals Christ who is Wisdom. That distinguishes this book from all of the wisdom literature of the world.

The Book of Proverbs begins with the affirmation that of this fact.—There is no wisdom without truth; and there can be no discovery of truth apart from revelation, the revelation of Christ who is the Truth and the Wisdom of God. All the philosophical wisdom of the world (all of it) is utter foolishness, because "*there is no fear of God before their eyes*" (Rom. 3:18).

(1 Corinthians 1:17-25) "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. {18} For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. {19} For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. {20} Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? {21} For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. {22} For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: {23} But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; {24} But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. {25} Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

CHRIST IS WISDOM

I want you to see that Christ is Wisdom, that he alone is Wisdom and that he alone can make us wise. That is the message of this inspired Book of Wisdom. In chapter eight wisdom is personified. It is obvious that the personification of wisdom spoken of in that chapter is Christ.

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

(Proverbs 8:14-18) "Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom: I *am* understanding; I have strength. {15} By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. {16} By me princes rule, and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth. {17} I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. {18} Riches and honour *are* with me; *yea*, durable riches and righteousness."

(Proverbs 8:35) "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD."

But I want you to see that **Christ is the Wisdom spoken of and speaking throughout these thirty-one chapters.** This is not a book about moral philosophy. The Book of Proverbs is a Book about Christ the Wisdom of God and the Truth of God.

James said, "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him*" (James. 1:5). The apostle Paul tells us, "*But unto them who are called, both Jews and*

Greeks, Christ (is) the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). In 1 Corinthians 1:30 we read, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom."

This Book of Proverbs teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ, our incarnate God, our crucified Substitute, our risen and exalted Lord, our omnipotent Savior is the very wisdom of God. *"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"* (Pro. 3:6).

A COMPARISON

Compare what is written in the Book of Proverbs about wisdom and what is written elsewhere in the Book of God about Christ, and you will see clearly that the Wisdom spoken of here is a person, not an attribute, and that that person is our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1:20) "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets." **(1:23)** "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

➤ (Matthew 18:3) "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

(1:33) "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

➤ (Matthew 11:28) "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

(2:4) "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures;"

➤ (Colossians 2:3) "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

(8:1) "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?" **(8:4)** "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice *is* to the sons of man."

➤ (John 7:37) "In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

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

➤ (Luke 10:21) "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

(8:6) "Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips *shall be* right things."

➤ (Luke 4:22) "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

(8:14) "Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom: I *am* understanding; I have strength."

- (1 Corinthians 1:30) "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"

(8:17) "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."

- (Galatians 2:20) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Matthew 7:7) "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:"

(8:20) "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:"

- (Psalms 23:3) "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

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

- (Colossians 1:17) "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

(8:23) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."

- (John 1:1) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

(8:27) "When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:"

➤ (John 1:3) "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

(8:30) "Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him;"

➤ (Hebrews 1:2) "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Luke 3:22) "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (John 17:24) "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

(8:32) "Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed *are they that keep my ways*."

➤ (John 15:10) "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

(8:35) "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD."

➤ (John 6:47) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

(9:5) "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine *which* I have mingled."

➤ (John 6:35) "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

FAITH IN CHRIST

If you would be wise read Proverbs 30 and learn wisdom. The only true wisdom man has is the wisdom of faith, faith in Christ. The man speaking here is Agur, the son of Jakeh. He tells us in verse one that what he is declaring is prophetic. Specifically, it is prophetic of Christ and faith in him.

Wisdom begins with (faith begins with) a confession of our utter helplessness, unworthiness, and ignorance as fallen, sinful creatures before God.

(Proverbs 30:2) "Surely I *am* more brutish than *any* man, and have not the understanding of a man."

This is the cry of the penitent, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" If we are to walk in the path of wisdom, we must acknowledge our own guilt and weakness. Agur goes on to declare, in verse 3, that he has no knowledge of God, no wisdom, no understanding of God. **We will never know God, we will never know Christ until we are convinced that we don't.**

(Proverbs 30:3) "I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy."

This wisdom, the knowledge of God which is eternal life (John 17:3) **comes by divine revelation**. "*For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness*" (1 Cor. 3:19). Even the Greek philosophers could not answer man's quest for the true meaning of life. The best the philosophers of Athens could do was erect an altar to "*the unknown God*" (Acts 17:23). We cannot by searching find out God. You will come to know him only when he reveals his Son in you, as he did with Saul of Tarsus (Gal. 1:15).

Faith sees, acknowledges, confesses, trusts, and worships the risen, exalted Christ (30:4). Overwhelmed by the thought of God's greatness and power revealed in Christ (the crucified, risen Savior), and by the infinite distance separating man and God, Agur asked a series of penetrating questions

(Proverbs 30:4) "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

God graciously forced **Job** to face and deal with these same questions, laying him in the dust before him.

(Job 38:4-7) "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. {5} Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? {6} Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; {7} When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Agur is talking about Christ, the Son of God. Verse 4 ends with an electrifying question: "*What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?*" God has a Son! "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (John 1:1). Isaiah would prophesy, "*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*" (Isa. 9:6).

- Christ descended from heaven to save his people from their sins.
- This same Christ is God the Creator and Ruler of all things, who upholds all things by the Word of his power. He bound the wind in his fists and holds the waters as in a garment.
- It is he who established the ends of the earth.

I did not draw this interpretation of Agur's words out of my hat. This is precisely what Paul tells us as he sets before us the essence of saving faith (Rom. 10:6-13).

(Romans 10:6-11) "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who

shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) {7} Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) {8} But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; {9} That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. {11} For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

(Romans 10:13) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Blessed is that man whom the Lord God graciously humbles before him as he did Job, Agur and Saul of Tarsus. Such humiliation comes only when Christ is revealed, when you are made to see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

That faith that God gives to and works in the hearts of men comes from and rests entirely upon the pure Word of God. Taking Christ, as he is revealed in Holy Scripture, as our Shield and Refuge, we have peace with God (Pro. 30:5; Ps. 119:160, Isa. 26:3).

(Proverbs 30:5) "Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

(Psalms 119:160) "Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever."

(Isaiah 26:3) "Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee."

True wisdom, this wisdom that comes from Christ who is the Wisdom of God, **bows to the revelation and authority of Holy Scripture**, the Word of God (Pro. 30:6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

(Proverbs 30:6) "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

(2 Timothy 3:16-17) "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: {17} That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

CHRIST IN PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs, the Book of Wisdom, is all about Christ. He is to be seen everywhere in the Book.

1. **It is Christ who calls sinners** to repentance, promising grace to all who come to him and warning rebels of the destruction they bring upon themselves by their rebellion and unbelief (1:20-33; 29:1).

(Proverbs 1:20-33) "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: {21} She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*, {22} How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? {23} Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. {24} Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; {25} But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: {26} I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; {27} When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. {28} Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: {29} For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: {30} They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. {31} Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. {32} For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. {33} But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

(Proverbs 29:1) "He, that being often reproved hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

2. **When Christ enters our hearts** the knowledge he gives is pleasant to our souls. He gives us understanding and protection from all evil (2:10-17).

(Proverbs 2:10-18) "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; {11} Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: {12} To deliver thee from the way of the evil *man*, from the man that speaketh froward things; {13} Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; {14} Who rejoyce to do evil, *and* delight in the frowardness of the wicked; {15} Whose ways *are* crooked, and *they* froward in their paths: {16} To deliver thee from the strange woman, *even* from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words; {17} Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. {18} For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead."

3. **Christ is our Surety** who snared himself with the words of his mouth (6:1-2).

(Proverbs 6:1-2) "My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, *if* thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, {2} Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth."

4. **Christ is that One called "Wisdom"** (ch. 8) by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who leads in the way of righteousness, causes us to inherit the treasures of boundless grace, who being set up from everlasting stood and spoke as our Wisdom in covenant grace before the world began.

5. **Christ is that One called “Wisdom” who has built his house** from hewn stones upon seven pillars of grace with the sacrifices of God (ch. 9).
6. **Christ is that One called “Wisdom” who teaches his people how to live in this world for the glory of God in every relationship and experience** (chaps. 10-29). The fear of God (faith in Christ) is the source and beginning of all true wisdom and knowledge in every relationship and walk of life.
7. **Christ is that One called “Wisdom” who teaches us and convinces us of divine truth, for he is the Truth.**

➤ Divine Sovereignty (16:1-4; 21:1)

(Proverbs 16:1) "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, *is* from the LORD."

(Proverbs 16:4) "The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

(Proverbs 22:1) "A *good* name *is* rather to be chosen than great riches, *and* loving favour rather than silver and gold."

➤ Redemption (16:6-8; 17:15; Isa. 45:20)

(Proverbs 16:6-8) "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil. {7} When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. {8}

Better *is* a little with righteousness than great revenues without right."

(Proverbs 17:15) "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD."

8. **Wisdom calls for us to trust our God in all things, giving him our hearts** (3:5-6; 4:23; 23:26).

(Proverbs 3:5-6) "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. {6} In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

(Proverbs 4:23) "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."

(Proverbs 23:26) "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

Application:

1. **Be wise, like the coney, and take refuge in Christ, the Rock of Salvation.**

(Proverbs 30:26) "The conies *are but* a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks."

“These are an emblem of the people of God, who are a weak and feeble people, unable of themselves to perform spiritual duties, to exercise grace, to withstand the corruptions of their nature, resist the temptations of Satan, bear up under afflictive providences, and grapple

with spiritual enemies, or defend themselves from them: but such heavenly wisdom is given them, as to betake themselves for refuge and shelter to Christ, the Rock of Israel; the Rock of salvation, the Rock that is higher than they; a strong one, on which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: and here they are safe from the storms of divine wrath, and the avenging justice of God; from the rage and fury of men, and the fiery darts of Satan; here they dwell safely and delightfully, and have all manner of provision at hand for them; they are the inhabitants of that Rock, who have reason to sing indeed!"

(John Gill)

(Isaiah 33:16) "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence *shall be* the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters *shall be* sure."

(Isaiah 42:11) "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up *their voice*, the villages *that* Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains."

2. **Don't play the part of the hypocritical spider.**

(Proverbs 30:28) "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

John Gill suggests that the spider here “may represent hypocrites, whose hope and trust are as the spider’s web, built upon their own righteousness, spun out of their own hearts; a fine, thin, slender thread, which cannot bear one stroke of the besom (broom) of divine justice. Such as

these are in the palaces of Christ the King, are in his churches, hypocrites in Zion.”

(Job 8:13-14) "So *are* the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: {14} Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust *shall be* a spider's web."

¹ Date: Danville (Tuesday PM—06/25/03)
Rescue Baptist Church, Rescue, CA (Friday PM—07/04/03)
Tape # X-66a
Readings: *Larry Brown & Bobbie Estes*