

Wisdom Psalms, pt.i

To the Hebrew mind, *wisdom* does not refer to outstanding intelligence or high academic acumen. One that is wise is not one that is necessarily the valedictorian of his class or one that matches the Hebrew equivalent of Albert Einstein. Wisdom has to do with living *Coram Deo*, before the face of God. Therefore, from a biblical perspective, wisdom is intensely practical; it concerns and governs all aspects of daily life. The wise person lives a righteous life in order to please God. Thus, against the theoretical approaches and abstract philosophical speculations of the Greek, biblical wisdom is concrete in its subject matter and practical in its outworking.

From these introductory remarks we can clearly see that the starting-point of wisdom has to do with the identity and character of God. That is to say, since wisdom is centrally identified as the way one lives one's life before God, then it is clear that in order to be wise one has to know God. How does one know God? By God's - revelation only. Therefore the Scripture repeatedly tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. See Ps [111:10](#); Pro [1:7](#); [9:10](#); also Job [28:28](#); etc. To the Israelites, this Self - revealing God is the God of creation as well as the God of Redemption. He is the God who created heaven and earth, Gen 1:1; etc., including Israel:

[Isa 44:2](#) Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: ...

He is also the God who redeemed her from Egyptian captivity and brought her unto himself to be his unique, treasured possession, Ex 19: 4 -5. Isaiah captures the notion of Yahweh as Israel's Creator or Maker as well as Redeemer in a few single verses:

[43:1](#) But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

[54:5](#) For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.

This very prophet also consolidates God's Self-revelation as Creator of all things and as Maker and read Redeemer of Israel in the following verse:

[44:24](#) Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,

This is the God, the true, historical, real God that Israel knew.

Wisdom therefore is man's response to God's Self - revelation in creation and in redemption, that is to say, in all history. Since *this* God is the source of our being and the source of our life, that we are to live wisely before his face is not only recommended but also and above all, required. This wise living constitutes making the correct moral choices. Dr. R. C. Sproul calls this wisdom's "moral imperative." It is no wonder therefore that the Scripture repeatedly reminds us:

Pro 14:16 One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.

16:6 ..by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil.

Job 28:28 Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.

The wise person is marked by a life of moral purity.

The five wisdom books of the Old Testament are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The New Testament wisdom book is James.

The wisdom psalms are therefore those chapters of the psalter that instruct us in the ways of righteous living to the pleasure and glory of God