

Wisdom

I. Introduction & Definition

A. English Vocabulary [Middle English, from Old English *wīsdōm*, from *wīs* wise]

1. accumulated philosophic or scientific learning: *knowledge*.
2. ability to discern inner qualities and relationships: *insight*.
3. good sense: *judgment*.

B. Hebrew

1. חָכָם *chakam* ^{#2449}: v. *to be wise, become wise, act wisely*. Used 27x.
2. חָכֵם *chakam* ^{#2450}: adj. *wise, shrewd*. Used 109x.
3. חֹכְמָה *chokmah* ^{#2451}: n. *wisdom, skill*. Used 145x. (#2452 Aram. 8x)
4. בִּיַּן *biyn* ^{#995}: v. *to discern, understand, consider*. Used 170x.
5. בִּינָה *biynah* ^{#998}: n. *understanding, discernment*. Used 32x.

C. Greek

1. σοφία ^{#4678}: n. *wisdom*. Used 51x. (28 by Paul)
2. σοφός ^{#4680}: adj. *wise*. Used 22x. (18 by Paul)

II. Old Testament Wisdom

A. Egypt and the Exodus

1. The first reference to wisdom is to the Satanic wisdom of this fallen world (Gen. 41:8).
 - a. It was this wisdom which motivated Egypt to enslave Israel (Ex. 1:10).
 - b. This Satanic wisdom fought against Moses (Ex. 7:11).
2. Joseph was discerning and wise, and elevated by the Lord to the throne of Pharaoh (Gen. 41:33,39).
3. The LORD blessed Israel with special wisdom (skill) in crafting the tabernacle, and associated priestly garments (Ex. 28:3; 31:3,6; 35:10,25,26,31,35; 36:1,2,4,8). Hiram will later be blessed with such wisdom (skill) in the building of Solomon's temple (1st Kgs. 7:14).
4. The new nation of Israel required wisdom for their political leadership (Deut. 1:13,15; 34:9). A nation that functions according to the revealed Word of God will be a wise and understanding nation (Deut. 4:5-9).

B. Solomon

1. Solomon possessed a wisdom in his youth that was instilled within his soul by his parents training (1st Kgs. 2:6,9).
2. Solomon had sufficient wisdom to know that he needed more wisdom (1st Kgs. 3:9).
3. Solomon received Divine wisdom for the purpose of administering justice (1st Kgs. 3:10-12,28).
4. Solomon's great wisdom in temporal life (1st Kgs. 4:29-34) did not prevent him from going astray (1st Kgs. 11:1-13) when his wisdom was corrupted by reason of his splendor (1st Kgs. 10:14-29).

C. Wisdom Literature

1. Job understood the way of wisdom and recognized God as the only source for that priceless mine (Job 28).
2. David understood the way of wisdom and recognized God as the only source for that priceless mine (Ps. 19).
3. The Death-march Psalmist understood the way of wisdom (Ps. 119:97-104).
4. The Proverbs of Solomon are the believer's basic text book for practical wisdom in daily life.
 - a. Wisdom shouts in the street, warning us of life's danger (Prov. 1:20).
 - b. Wisdom comes from the LORD and His revealed Word (Prov. 2:1-22).
 - c. Wisdom is among the greatest blessings that a believer can receive in time (Prov. 3:13-26).
 - d. Wisdom is among the greatest blessings that a parent can impart to their children (Prov. 4-7).
 - e. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Wisdom, and His eternal testimony is most glorious (Prov. 8).
5. Ecclesiastes warns the believer how even wisdom can become empty when it is divorced from Divine viewpoint (Ecc. 2:12-17). That's why the fear of the LORD is so vital for maintaining Divine viewpoint (Ecc. 12:9-14).

D. Prophets

1. Isaiah presented the coming Christ as the ultimate King of Wisdom (Isa. 11:2).
2. Jeremiah warned about the perverted wisdom that Israel was following (Jer. 8:8,9).
3. Ezekiel revealed the wisdom of Satan and how it became corrupted (Ezek. 28:12,17).
4. Daniel served Gentile kings in godliness and wisdom (Dan. 1:4,17,20).
5. Hosea summarized the way of wisdom for all believers (Hos. 14:9).

III. New Testament Wisdom

- A. The Lord Jesus Christ grew, increasing in wisdom as He learned in His humanity (Lk. 2:40,52).
- B. Wisdom was a characteristic of the first deacons (Acts 6:3,10).
- C. Paul's Development of Wisdom. [Paul develops the most amount of material pertaining to wisdom in the New Testament. 46 out of 73 occurrences of σοφία & σοφός are used by Paul.]
 - 1. The wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world are vividly contrasted (1st Cor. 1:18-31).
 - 2. The wisdom of God is revealed by spiritual means (1st Cor. 2:1-16).
 - 3. The wisdom of God is displayed in this world as foolishness (1st Cor. 3:18-20).
 - 4. Ephesians teaches that the Church is the recipient of God's manifold wisdom (Eph. 1:8,17).
 - a. We exhibit that wisdom towards angels (Eph. 3:10).
 - b. We exhibit that wisdom towards men (Eph. 5:15).
 - 5. Colossians teaches that the wisdom of the Church is in Christ (Col. 1:9,28; 2:3; 3:16; 4:5).
- D. James is a work of New Testament wisdom literature, along the lines of Proverbs in the OT.
 - 1. If you lack wisdom, go to the Father in prayer (Jms. 1:5).
 - 2. Wisdom is manifest by its deeds (Jms. 3:13).
 - a. Cosmic wisdom (Jms. 3:15,16).
 - b. God's wisdom (Jms. 3:17).