

WISDOM (SOPHIA)
Biblical Words
Banska Bystrica, 25th April 2021

ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἁγιασμὸς καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις

1Cor 1:30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption

אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם מֵצָא חֵכְמָה וְאָדָם יִפְיֵק תְּבוּנָה
כִּי טוֹב סְהֵרָה מִסְהֵר־כֶּסֶף וּמַחְרוּץ תְּבוּאָתָהּ
וְקָרָה הִיא (מִפְּנֵי) [מִפְּנֵי] וְכָל־הַפְּצִיד לֹא יִשְׁוּבָהּ
אֲרָךְ יָמִים בְּיְמֵינָהּ בְּשִׁמְאוּלָהּ עֵשֶׂר וְכָבוֹד
הַרְבֵּיהּ דְּרַכֵּי־נֶעַם וְכָל־נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שְׁלוֹם
עֲצֵי־חַיִּים הִיא לְמַחְזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתַמְכִּיהָ מֵאֲשֶׁר

Proverbs 3:13-18 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, ¹⁴ for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. ¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. ¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.

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0. INTRODUCTION

- Past topics: (1) Scripture; (2) Law; (3) Gospel; (4) Sin; (5) Repentance; (6) Faith; (7) Hope; (8) Love; (9) Kingdom of God; (10) Church; (11) Covenant; (12) "The LORD" [Yahweh]; (13) Hell; (14) Redemption; (15) the World; (16) Judgment; (17) Offence; (18) Wisdom; [→ lust/desire → shalom → forgiveness]

0.1. USAGE

- Wisdom → complicated as reality itself → philosophia (system of thought about all reality)

- **WISDOM** → values (faith, religion, meaning of life); motives (love, attachment); practice; justice (righteousness); discipline (self-control); insight; knowledge; decision-making (judgment); speech; character; relationships (taking offence)...
- [LACOSTE] In the Bible, “wisdom” is the practical capacity to use methods, in trade (Ez 28:4f.), handicrafts (Sir 38:31), navigation (Eze 27:8f.), the art and profession of the scribe (Pro 22:29; Ps 45:2; Sir 38:24), and strategy (2 Sm 16:23), as well as in politics and other domains. Wisdom serves to resolve everyday problems in order to achieve one’s purpose in life. It is neutral: the term is applied to the competence of the craftsman whether he makes idols (Is 40:20; Jer 10:9) or accessories for the cult* of YHWH (Ex 28:3, 31:3, and 31:6; 1 Kgs 7:14), and it is even used to describe criminal scheming (Ex 1:10; see Acts 7:19 and 2 Sm 13:3) or the plan of salvation* (Rom 11:33).

0.2. GREEK

- [PASSOW]

1, 2, 8; *skill in driving*; Plat. Trag. 123 C; ἡ ἐντεχνος σ., Id. Prot. 321 321 D; also, in not so good a sense, *cunning, shrewdness, craft*, Hdt. 1, 68, etc.—2. *skill* etc.—3. *knowledge of a higher kind*, as and art, aa in carpentry, *δὲ βὰ τε πάσης* in matters of common life, *sound judgment*, etc.—*of the sciences, learning, wisdom, philosophy, freq. in Eur., etc., cf. esp. in poetry*, Pind. (who in O. 9, 161 attributed to the seven sages, Hdt. 1 Arist. Eth. N. 6, 7.—Cf. σοφός, σοφία), cf. Xen. An. 30, 60; ἡ περὶ τὸν βίον σ., Plat. Prot. *φιστή* throughout.

- [ABBOTT-SMITH]

σοφία, -as, ἡ, [in LXX chiefly for *חָכְמָה*;] *skill, intelligence, wisdom*, ranging from knowledge of the arts and matters of daily life to mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense; (a) of human wisdom: 1 Co 2^{1, 4, 5}, Ja 3¹⁵, Re 13¹⁸ 17⁹; σ. Σολομῶνος, Mt 12⁴², Lk 11³¹; Αἰγυπτίων, Ac 7²²; Ἕλληνας σ. ζητοῦσιν, 1 Co 1²²; σ. λόγου, 1 Co 1¹⁷; τ. σοφῶν, ib. ¹⁹ (LXX); τ. κόσμου, ib. ^{20, 21} 3¹⁹; ἀνθρωπίνῃ, 1 Co 2¹³; σαρκικῇ, 11 Co 1¹²; of wisdom in spiritual things: Lk 21¹⁵, Ac 6^{3, 10} 7¹⁰, 1 Co 2⁶, Col 1²⁸ 2²³ 3¹⁶ 4⁵, Ja 1⁵ 3^{13, 17}, 11 Pe 3¹³; λόγος σοφίας, 1 Co 12⁸; πειῖμα σοφίας, Eph 1¹⁷; σ. καὶ φρόνησις, Eph 1⁸; σ. καὶ σύνεσις, Col 1⁹; (b) of divine wisdom: of God, Ro 11³³, 1 Co 1^{21, 24} 2⁷, Re 7¹²; πολυποίκιλος, Eph 3¹⁰; of Christ, Mt 13⁵⁴, Mk 6², Lk 2^{40, 52}, 1 Co 1³⁰, Col 2³, Re 5¹²; of wisdom personified, Mt 11¹⁹, Lk 7³⁵ 11⁴⁹.†

SYN.: σύνεσις, *intelligence*; φρόνησις, *prudence*, which with σ. make up (Arist., N. Eth., i, 13) the three intellectual ἀρεταί. σ. is *wisdom* primary and absolute; in distinction from which φ. is practical, σύνεσις critical, both being applications of σ. in detail (cf. Lft., and ICC on Col 1⁹; Lft., Notes, 317 f.; Tr., Syn., § lxxv; Cremer, 870 ff.).

1. DESCRIPTION OF WISDOM

1.1. “LEVELS” OF WISDOM

1.1.1. HUMAN SKILL

- 1Cor 2:4 ...my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom (οὐκ ἐν πειθοί[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις]), but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power
- Eze 28:4 by your wisdom and your understanding you have made wealth for yourself
- Eze 27:8 The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your rowers; your skilled men (חַכְמָיִךְ), O Tyre, were in you; they were your pilots
- Pro 22:29 Do you see a man skillful in his work (חָכִים בְּמַלְאכָתוֹ)? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.
- Exodus 1:10 Come, let us deal shrewdly (חָכְמָה) with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.

[The Heart of Judgment] To judge well, one must comprehend the subtle interplay of (1) motivations and (2) calculations, (3) aversions and (4) desires, (5) passions and (6) prejudices, (7) beliefs and (8) misbeliefs that inform human thought and action. Practical judgment requires a thorough “knowledge of the human soul”.

1.1.2. WISDOM BEGINS WITH WORSHIP

- → fear of God →
Job 28:28 And he said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding. (וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָדָם הֵן יִרְאֵת אֲדֹנָי הִיא חֵכְמָה וְסוּר מִרָע בִּינָה)
Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction (יִרְאֵת יְהוָה רֵאשִׁית דַּעַת חֵכְמָה וּמוֹסֵר אֲוִילִים בְּזוּז)

1.1.3. PROPHECY-LIKE WISDOM

- **2 Samuel 15:12** Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor (יֹעֵץ דָּוִד)
- **2 Samuel 16:23** Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.

1.1.4. A CHARISMA

- [BrownColin(ed.)] Over all acquired and transmitted wisdom, however, stands the wisdom which is given as a gift by God to King → Solomon (1Ki 3:5-14), which finds expression in judicial shrewdness (1 Ki 3:16-28)
- **1Cor 2:13** And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual
- **1Cor 12:8** To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

1.2. MYSTERIES STUDIED BY WISDOM

- **Pro 1:1-6** The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: ² To know wisdom and instruction, (חֵכְמָה וּמוֹסֵר) to understand words of insight (אִמְרֵי בִינָה), ³ to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; ⁴ to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth- ⁵ Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, ⁶ to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles (דְּבַרֵי חֵכְמִים וְהִירָתָם).

1.2.1. THE PROVIDENCE → BOOK OF JOB

- Job → suffering of the righteous → encountering the living God
- Ecclesiastes → meaning of life → this life is vapour

1.2.2. PSYCHOLOGY OF LOVE → SONG OF SOLOMON

- Song of Solomon → love → intensity

1.2.3. CREATION ORDER → BOOK OF PROVERBS

- ants; sexual relationships...

1.3. SPIRITUAL WISDOM

- esoteric? → [Hidden_Wisdom_Esoteric_Traditions] CHRISOSTOM: "the most characteristic trait of mystery is the fact that it is announced everywhere."

1.3.1. WORLDLY AND DEMONIC

- **Exodus 7:11** Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts...
- **Job 5:12-13** He frustrates the devices of the crafty (עָרוּמִים), so that their hands achieve no success (תּוֹשִׁיעָה). ¹³He catches the wise in their own craftiness (לִכְדַּר חֵכְמִים בְּעָרְמָם), and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end
- **Romans 1:21-23** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the

immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles

- **1Cor 1:20-21** Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe
- **James 3:14-15** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic

1.3.2. CHRISTIAN

- **James 3:17-18** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
- **1Cor 2:6-7** Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.
- **1Cor 2:12-13** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual
- **Eph 5:15-17** Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

1.3.3. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

- **1Cor 1:30** He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption

1.3.4. WARNING FROM QOHELET

- wisdom → vanity of life

1.4. WISDOM IN JESUS

[Chambers, O. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*] We live in two universes: the universe of common-sense in which we come in contact with things by our senses and the universe of revelation with which we come in contact by faith. The wisdom of God fits the two universes exactly, the one interprets the other. Jesus Christ is the expression of the Wisdom of God.

1.4.1. CHILD

- **Luke 2:40, 52** And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him. . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

1.4.2. MAN

- **Isaiah 11:1-5** There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins
- **John 5:19** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son

does likewise.

1.4.3. THE LORD

- **Rom 11:33-36** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen
- 1Cor 1:30

2. BENEFITS OF WISDOM

2.1. GOD'S FAVOUR

- **Proverbs 8:33-36** Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. ³⁴ Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. ³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, ³⁶ but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.

2.2. PROTECTION FROM LIFE-DANGERS

- bad companions, against impurity and intemperance, against anger, strifes, and quarrels.
- conspiracies → **Proverbs 1:10-15** My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. ¹¹ If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason; ¹² like Sheol let us swallow them alive, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; ¹³ we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with plunder; ¹⁴ throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse"- ¹⁵ my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths
- illicit sex → **Proverbs 5:18-19** Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, ¹⁹ a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love
- alcohol → **Proverbs 20:1** Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise
- lying tongue → **Proverbs 6:16-18** There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: ¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil
- servitude →
 - **Proverbs 6:1-5** My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a stranger, ² if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth, ³ then do this, my son, and save yourself, for you have come into the hand of your neighbor: go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor. ⁴ Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; ⁵ save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler

2.3. SUCCESSFUL LIFE

- **Proverbs 2:20-22** So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. ²¹ For the upright will inhabit the land, and those with integrity will remain in it, ²² but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.
- **Proverbs 3:13-18** Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, ¹⁴ for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. ¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. ¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.

2.4. ETERNAL LIFE

- wisdom and the gospel...
- **2 Timothy 3:15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus

3. ACQUIRING WISDOM

3.1. SEARCH

- **Proverbs 2:3-5** if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, ⁴ if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

3.2. DISCIPLINE

- correction
- **Proverbs 12:1** Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid
- **Proverbs 3:11-12** My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, ¹² for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights

3.3. PRAYER

- **Proverbs 2:6-8** For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; ⁷ he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, ⁸ guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.
- **James 1:5-8** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

4. TO REMEMBER

- Wisdom begins in your personal relationship with God.
- Wisdom is a complex of many spiritual, rational and practical insights that lead to righteous living before God.
- Acquiring wisdom begins with humility, acknowledging a lack of it and asking for it from God.
- The gospel is the source of eternal wisdom.