

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 49

Proverbs 8

INTRODUCTION: The book of Proverbs constitutes a part of what we often describe as the “wisdom literature of the Old Testament.” Only three books can be strictly placed in this category—Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Also scattered throughout the Psalms are certain songs of the same nature.

The word “wisdom” is the equivalent of our word “philosophy.” Consequently, these books constitute the philosophic writings of the Bible. However, we must make a distinction between philosophy in general and the philosophy of the Bible. Philosophy as the world understands it, in the last analysis, consists of the asking of questions. There is a sincere attempt to discover the starting point of human philosophy through the asking of the question, “What is truth?”

Hebrew philosophy did not begin with a question; it began with an affirmation. It affirmed God; and, as a result of that affirmation, it further assumed that all wisdom is to be found in God. The Scripture says in Proverbs 9:10a, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.”

Proverbs 8 is a complete discourse on wisdom. Wisdom is personified (made to appear and speak as a person) and speaks for herself. Let us liken wisdom to a guest speaker at a service or a banquet. First, someone introduces her; then she gives her speech.

I. THE INTRODUCTION OF WISDOM. Read Proverbs 8:1-3. Here the master of ceremonies or the host introduces our speaker, Wisdom. First, the master of ceremonies names her. He calls the speaker “Wisdom” and “Understanding.” “Wisdom” refers to complete knowledge and absolute truth. “Understanding” describes perfect intelligence or a complete apprehension of wisdom.

In introducing Wisdom, the host describes her as standing at the center of the highways—at the place to which all roads lead. She is standing, moreover, at the gates, at the entries, at the doors and all the starting places. Her voice is heard at all the converging centers and at every point where a road starts toward these centers. In other words, Wisdom is introduced as being everywhere.

Comparing that to Hammond or the Calumet Region, we would say Wisdom is at the entrance to the Chicago Skyway; at the tollgate to the Indiana Toll Road; at City Hall; at the Lake County Courthouse in Crown Point; in downtown Hammond; in the Woodmar, River Oaks and Southlake shopping centers, etc. In other words, Wisdom is for everyone and is everywhere. There is no excuse for any of us not to have her and to know her.

II. WISDOM INTRODUCES HERSELF. See Proverbs 8:4-9. She first addresses herself to the simple and to the fools. The word “simple” means “unfolded.” This refers to a life that has not yet become “wrinkled,” which means it is spoken to the youth. The word “fools” means “those who are stupid in actions and who need help.” Wisdom reminds us that she always tells the truth about us. If man is a fool, she calls him a fool. She interprets actual fact. Someone once said, “God is a God of things as they are.” Wisdom always faces the facts.

Here is something that all of us ought to learn. We must face the issues. We must face life as it is. One of the most interesting things about getting sins forgiven is found in I John 1:9, “If we confess our sins....” In other words, we must face our sins. It is important that every person face life, face his problems head-on, and face reality. (Teacher, this would be a good place to warn the pupils of the danger of drinking, of taking dope, or of resorting to any other escape from reality.) Wisdom gives us happiness with reality and gives us a way to be happy without trying to find an escape.

III. WISDOM DESCRIBES HER TREASURES. Read Proverbs 8:12-21. She compares herself with things which men hold valuable. She declares that there is nothing that has any value by comparison with her. Mentioned are silver, gold and rubies, which are all held valuable by men. Wisdom is more valuable than them all.

IV. WISDOM UTTERS HER CLAIMS. See Proverbs 8:22-31. Notice the things which she offers: knowledge, prudence and purity. These are the secrets of all success. Kings, princes, nobles and judges are to rule by such wisdom. If one is to be successful in life, he must have the wisdom of God.

V. WISDOM MAKES A FINAL APPEAL. Notice Proverbs 8:32-36.

CONCLUSION: The inevitable question is, "How do I get wisdom?"

1. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord begins after bei
2. Wisdom is attained by asking God for her. James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
3. Wisdom is attained from those who have her. This shows the importance of seeking counsel from others who are wise people. (Teacher, it might be good to mention something about the cabinet that young people should have. Every young person should, when facing a big decision, confer with at least one of his parents, a pastor, someone who is a real friend, someone whom he feels has the gift of wisdom, and someone who is successful in the field the young person plans to enter.)