

WISDOM & CREATION

Wednesday, November 26

Reading: Proverbs 8:22-36

Proverbs 8:22 *"The LORD brought me forth as the first of His works, before His deeds of old; 23 I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.*

"Someone once said that the only way to make ourselves big is to minimize God. The minute that we focus on God's splendor and magnificence, however, we realize just how tiny we really are."¹ As Lady Wisdom describes her intimate connection with God, we get a taste of His glory and majesty. Notice the special bond between wisdom and the Creator.

WISDOM PREDATES CREATION (8:22-26) – These verses take our minds back to the creation account of Genesis 1. Before anything was made, wisdom "was given birth." God's wisdom was not the invention of people or a part of the created world.

WISDOM WAS PRESENT AT CREATION (8:27-29) – In poetic brilliance, Lady Wisdom describes how she witnessed the creation of the heavens and the earth.

WISDOM PARTICIPATED IN CREATION (8:30-31) – There is much debate over what the Hebrew word *āmôn* means. Some translate it as Wisdom being God's constant companion (NIV). Others believe it means Wisdom is like a child who joyfully plays in God's creation (NCV). The word most often means a craftsman or architect (NKJV; ESV; NRSV).² Proverbs has already told us that "by wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding He set the heavens in place" (3:19). Wisdom was actively involved in creation. She rejoices in God's work and particularly in humanity.

What is the point of all this? Since wisdom was so involved in the creation of God's world, how can we assume we can live successfully in it without following her call? The way to "find life and receive favor from the Lord" is to obey, pay attention, watch daily, wait patiently, & follow God's wisdom. That is the way to be blessed (8:32-36)!

This personification of wisdom became a common theme in later Jewish writings. The Rabbis identified the wisdom that created the world with the Torah (Law of Moses) and with the Spirit of God.³ By the time of the New Testament it was natural for Christians to think of Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of Lady Wisdom. Paul calls Jesus the "power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30). His words in Colossians 1:15-17 echo these words from Proverbs. Christ is seen as Creator and the One "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

This image of wisdom in the Old Testament is fulfilled and surpassed by the greatness of God the Son in the New Testament. To follow God's wisdom is ultimately to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ "Proverbs, Day 17." Through the Bible with Today in the Word. Vol. 2 – Job – Malachi, p. 82

² NIV = New International Version 2011; NCV = New Century Version; NKJV = New King James Version; ESV – English Standard Version; NRSV = New Revised Standard Version

³ Aikens, p. 86-88