

True Wisdom Versus the Wisdom of the World

Dean Moore

Teach us to number our days that we might apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Psalm 90:12

Someone has said: “Mankind has acquired great knowledge, but has not obtained true wisdom.” A history teacher said: “One thing that we learn from history is that people do not learn from history.” He meant that, for the most part, man does not correct the mistakes of those who lived before him. Because of the kind of world that we live in and its influence upon our thinking, it is vital that we remember how important true wisdom is, and act accordingly! The right kind of knowledge is very beneficial. The wrong can be corrupting and destructive! We need wisdom to be able to discern between the two and use the right kind of knowledge in the best way! Another word for wisdom is understanding. It is gaining more of an appreciation of reality from our Maker’s viewpoint!

Our entire future, including the endless years of all eternity, depends upon our choosing true wisdom! We need to learn about the works of our Creator, the wisdom that He has revealed, and the priceless provisions that have been made for our salvation! Each person needs to be made free from the guilt of sin. He needs to be made free from the practice and power of sin. He needs deliverance from the results of sin, i.e. death and final judgment! The thinking of the world in general is the result of vain thinking and living. It stems from human nature which is very limited, depraved, and in opposition to the wisdom of God. “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (I John 2:16-17).

It is easy to see that for life to be as it should be a person needs to acknowledge the infinite greatness and goodness of his Creator, and live in harmony or in subjection to Him. Surely our future depends upon His thoughts concerning us. His wisdom and love surpasses all human comprehension! Man’s existence is evidence of infinite wisdom and infinite *love*! The Bible gives us the

light that we need in order to see things as they really are. It gives discernment between right and wrong. It is a revelation of truth and righteousness that enables us to find life as it was intended to be, while at the same time preparing us for eternal life! Death came about at the beginning of human history as the result of man's rejection of God's eternal way of life! Since life comes from God, He can, and will, raise His people to life again to live eternally in His coming kingdom!

One thing that wisdom teaches us is that righteousness is the dominating principle of the universe! Nations rise and fall depending upon whether or not they have lived in true wisdom! King Solomon said: "Wisdom is better than strength . . . wisdom is better than weapons of war" (Eccl 9:16, 18). We are told: "The fear of the LORD is the *beginning* of wisdom" and "He stores up sound wisdom for the upright" (Ps 111:10, emphasis added ; Prov 2:7). A righteous person finds peace, security, hope, and love while the world misleads, confuses, and robs a person of what is the most valuable. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their own craftiness'" (I Cor 3:19)! Solomon said: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Eccl 1:2b). "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding" (Prov 4:7). He said: "The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble" (Prov 4:19). "Wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness" and "the path of the just is like the shining sun, *that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day*" (Eccl 2:13, Prov 4:18, emphasis added).

The Jewish people were given priceless truth and wisdom following their exodus from Egypt. They were told: "This is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statues, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him" (Deut 4:6, 7)? During the times when Israel obeyed God in following His word, they were blessed far more than any of the other nations! Their Scriptures, the Bible, have become the foundation of civilization in the world!

The greatest and most wonderful gift that God has given to man is the gift of His son! He was born of the virgin Mary miraculously by the power of God's holy

spirit. (Read Luke 1:26-35.) Prior to his birth, many, many prophecies had been given to Israel during many centuries. The circumstances of his birth, his ministry, death, and resurrection had been revealed, even minor details which no one could have known except God! The leaders delivered up Jesus to be crucified, God raised His son to immortal life to become His means of salvation to all people! Every repentant person, who has believed that Jesus is God's provision for forgiveness, has found that he is fully capable of bringing about reconciliation and peace with God! Christ becomes wisdom, redemption, hope, and power to them. Note Ephesians 1:3-8, 17-19. These verses point out that by trusting in Christ, a person finds forgiveness of sins, acceptance with God, and the privilege of being adopted into the family of God! Surely the greatest possible blessings for life today and for eternity are to be found in Christ!

God has spoken to mankind in many ways, giving people unlimited proof that He is their Life-giver, their Sustainer, and their only Hope! Men have been made in such a way as to be able to find the completion of their lives in their Creator only! Man is given a conscience (a sense of God's superior will), a freedom of will to choose what is right and reject what is evil. Man, when he is serious, realizes that he cannot "pass the buck" of responsibility to someone else, but that he must choose whose thinking he is going to trust and then act upon that decision! If he chooses his Maker's will, he finds that God's way is "perfect" (Ps 18:30)! If he chooses the thinking of the world, he finds that confusion, problems, and hopelessness dominate his future more and more! There seems to be no end of examples or proof of this as one looks at the lives of billions of people! Wouldn't it be far better to accept the unlimited proof of God's word, trust His wisdom, and, in finding it to be the answer to our needs, help others to find what we have found?

The fact that Jesus was raised from the power of the grave proves that his substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of mankind was accepted by God! As a result, all power and authority has been given to him! (Note Acts 1:1-11; I Cor 15:20-25). He makes it possible for people to have access to God. In this harmonious relationship they are able to have fellowship with God and His son (John 14:23)! True believers experience "newness of life" (Rom 6:4). They are given a foretaste of life as it will be in the coming kingdom (Heb 6:4-5). In measure, they become acquainted with the kind of life that people will find following the return of Christ!

True Christianity is a divine calling! The purpose, nature, goal, and means are 100% of God! To make the mistake of adding to, or taking away, from this calling according to one's own judgment is an example of extreme foolishness performed at the greatest peril to one's future for all eternity! There is no greater mistake than substituting human reason in the place of divine wisdom! Speaking for God, the prophet Isaiah said:

'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. . . So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.' (Isa 55:8, 9, 11)

Salvation comes to us by our believing God's word and acting accordingly, not by following our own judgment! "Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). Each person is born into a world that is, in many ways, in opposition to its Creator! Yet for thousands of years, God has been calling people *out* of the thinking of the world unto Himself — unto His thinking! We read:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the LORD. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.' 'I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.' (2 Cor 6:14-18)

This is separation *from* whatever is contrary to the mind of God, and *unto* God Himself!

The present world system of unbelieving humanity operates, or is based upon the principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and pleasure! Jesus said: “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). Paul said:

You once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Eph 2:2-3)

Peter said: “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (I Peter 1:15-16). Speaking for God, the prophet Amos said: “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed” (Amos 3:3)? Jesus said: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8). This involves thinking upon “whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things” (Phil 4:8).

The contrast is again given to us in Paul’s writings:

“In the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! . . . For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” (2 Tim 3:1-5, 4:3-4)

James tells us: “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and

without hypocrisy” (James 3:17). We are to become pure even as He is pure (I John 3:3). Why should people mentally drink in moral sewage of the world when the entire universe is declaring the righteousness and glory of God? God’s purpose is to make us after the likeness of His son and Himself (Phil 2:5). If this is what we want, if our decisions and actions prove that we trust God’s will for our lives, then God’s promise of our being coheirs with His son for all eternity is ours!

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD. And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. . . For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. (Ps 1:1-3, 6)