



**Planted by streams of water:
An Exposition of Psalm 1
Part Two
Wisdom and the Psalms**

For greater detail of what follows I refer you to the following book: The Old Testament: An Introduction Volume 3 Psalms and Wisdom containing a wealth of background information.

The Importance of Wisdom

Wisdom is granted by God and is divine

Solomon asked God for wisdom: 1 kings 3:4-15; 10:8-9; 2Chron. 1:3-12

1 Kings 3:28:

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice. (For the whole story see 1kings 3:16-28)

Proverbs 8:15-16: By me (wisdom) kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; 16 by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.

Wisdom at the city gates (where people meet)

Proverbs 8:1-5

Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? 2 On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud: 4 "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. 5 O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense.

Acts 17:16-17

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

The Universality of Wisdom

1 Kings 4:29-34

²⁹ And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, ³⁰ so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. ³² He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. ³³ He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. ³⁴ And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

Wisdom recognized by outsiders

1 Kings 10:1-9

Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. 2 She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. . . 6 And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, 7 but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. 8 Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! 9 Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness."

Wisdom's Field of Interest

Its interest is the preservation flow of human life on earth and make sure the foolish alternative to life is never tested. If the alternative was tested no one would be around to call it “foolish.”

Its Origin

The Origin of wisdom tradition is found in tribal communal life where existence was always precarious. The tribal “father” and the council of elders were essential. Authority is not enough it must be wise authority. Also wisdom without authority is of no use if the advice is not heeded. Wisdom is by nature authoritative and incontrovertible. Wisdom is not property of anyone anymore than is gravity.

When tribal life gave way to city life the king as “father” took on the role of applying wisdom for the benefit of that community.

The Psalms fall under the section called Kethuvim which specializes in wisdom and the Psalms are kingly prayers.

A comparison: Psalm 1 and the Lord's Prayer

What are the commonalities/similarities? What are the differences?

Psalm 1:1-6

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Matthew 6:9-14

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.