

WISDOM

Gifted Artisans: Ex 28:3; 31:3,6; 35:26,31; 36:1-2

Exodus 31:1-6 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2“See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3“**And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom**, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4**“to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, 5“in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship.** 6“**And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom** in the hearts of all who are gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you:

Exodus 35:26 And all the women whose heart **stirred with wisdom** spun yarn of goats’ hair.

Deuteronomy 34:9 Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of **the spirit of wisdom**, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

1 Kings 7:14: The craftsman Hiram is “filled with wisdom and understanding and cunning to work all works in brass.”

1 Kings 3:28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that **the wisdom of God** was in him **to administer justice.**

2 Chronicles 9:22-23 So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and **wisdom.** 23**And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.**

Acts 6:3 “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and **wisdom**, whom we may appoint **over this business;**

Spiritual Wisdom Received (faith, acted upon)

Deuteronomy 4:1-8 “**Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you.** 2“**You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.** 3“**Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Baal Peor; for the Lord your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. 4“But you who held fast to the Lord your God** are alive today, every one of you. 5“**Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. 6“Therefore be careful to observe them;** for this is **your wisdom and your understanding** in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a **wise** and understanding people.’ 7“**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? 8“And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?**

Hosea 14:9 “**Who is wise?** Let him understand these things {*content of 14:1-8*). **Who is prudent?** Let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right; The righteous walk in them, But transgressors stumble in them.”

Psalms 51:6 – “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou **shalt make me to know wisdom.**”

Psalms 107:43 – “Whoso is **wise**, and **will observe** these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.”

Proverbs 11:2 – “When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but **with the lowly is wisdom**.”

Matthew 11:16-20 “But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, 17“and saying: ‘We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.’ 18“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ **But wisdom is justified by her children.**” 20Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:

Ephesians 1:7-10 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace **8which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence**, 9having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

Colossians 1:9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that **you may be filled** with the knowledge of His will in all **wisdom** and spiritual understanding;

Psalms 90:12: “So teach us to number our days, that we may **apply our hearts unto wisdom**.”

2 Timothy 3:15-17 ...and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you **wise for salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Proverbs 4:5-7 – “Get **wisdom**, get understanding... **Wisdom** is the principal thing.”

James 3:13 – “Who is **wise** and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of **wisdom**.”

The Beginning of Wisdom

Proverbs 9:10 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

Proverbs 1:7 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise **wisdom** and instruction.”

Psalms 111:10 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.”

Proverbs 15:33 – “The fear of the LORD is the instruction of **wisdom**; and before honour is humility.”

Job 28:28 – “And unto man he said, Behold, **the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom**; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

Proverbs 14:16 – “A **wise** man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.”

Psalms 19:7-9: “The law of the LORD is perfect... the testimony of the LORD is sure, making **wise** the simple... the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever.”

Wisdom as Piety (virtue)

Psalm 111:10 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.”

James 3:13 – “Who is a **wise** man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation **his works with meekness of wisdom.**”

Proverbs 3:7 – “Be not **wise** in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”

Proverbs 14:16 – “A **wise** man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.”

Job 1:1 – “There was a man... one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”

Daniel 2:20–23: “**Wisdom** and might are his... He revealeth the deep and secret things.”

Wisdom as a gift

Proverbs 2:5–9 – “Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For **the LORD giveth wisdom**: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He keeps the paths of justice and preserves the way of his saints. Then you will **understand** righteousness and justice and equity, every good path.”

James 3:17: “The **wisdom from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle...”

2 Chronicles 9:22-23 ... to hear **his{Solomon’s} wisdom, which God had put in his heart.**

Ephesians 1:17 ...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of **wisdom** and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

God’s Wisdom

Luke 11:49 “Therefore **the wisdom of God** also said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,’

Romans 11:33-34 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the **wisdom** and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?”

Proverbs 3:19–20: “The LORD by **wisdom** founded the earth.”

Wisdom Embodied in Jesus Christ

Proverbs 8:1-23 Does not **wisdom** cry out, And understanding lift up her voice? 2 She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, Beside the way, where the paths meet. 3 She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, At the entrance of the doors: 4 **“To you, O men, I call, And my voice is to the sons of men. 5 O you simple ones, understand prudence, And you fools, be of an understanding heart.** 6 Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, And from the opening of my lips will come right things; 7 For my mouth will speak truth; Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. 8 All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; Nothing crooked or perverse is in them. 9 They are all plain to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge. 10 Receive my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choice gold; 11 For **wisdom** is better than rubies, And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.

12 “I, **wisdom**, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion. 13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate. 14 Counsel is mine, and sound **wisdom**; I am understanding, I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, All the judges of the earth. 17 I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me.

18 Riches and honor are with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. 20 I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, 21 That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasuries. **22 “The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. 23 I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.**

Matthew 12:42 “The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear **the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.**

Luke 2:40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with **wisdom**; and the grace of God was upon Him...2:52 And Jesus increased in **wisdom** and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Mark 6:2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this Man get these things? And **what wisdom is this which is given to Him**, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!

1 Corinthians 1:24, 30: “**Christ** the power of God and the **wisdom** of God.”

Colossians 2:2-3 ...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of **Christ, 3in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

Isaiah 11:1-2 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 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 of the fear of the Lord.

Worldly Wisdom Contrasted

Isaiah 29:14: “The **wisdom** of their **wise** men shall perish.”

Job 37:24 – “Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are **wise of heart.**”

1 Corinthians 1:17-2:16 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with **wisdom of words**, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: “I will destroy **the wisdom of the wise**, And bring to nothing the understanding of **the prudent.**”

20 Where is the **wise**? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the **wisdom of this world**? 21 **For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.** 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after **wisdom**; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** 25 Because the foolishness of God is **wiser** than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many **wise** according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the **wise**, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are

despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30But of Him you are in **Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God**—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

2:1And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or **of wisdom** declaring to you the testimony of God. 2For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of **human wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5that your faith should not be in the **wisdom of men** but in the power of God.

6However, we speak **wisdom** among those who are mature, yet not **the wisdom of this age**, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7But we speak the **wisdom** of God in a mystery, the hidden **wisdom** which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

10But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13These things we also speak, not in words which **man’s wisdom** teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:19 For **the wisdom of this world** is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the **wise** in their own craftiness”;

Wisdom in the Church’s members

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 for to one is given **the word of wisdom** through the Spirit, to another **the word of knowledge** through the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

James 3:13-17 Who is **wise** and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that **his works are done in the meekness of wisdom**. 14But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15**This wisdom does not descend from above**, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17But **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.

Luke 21:15: “I will give you a mouth and wisdom.”

Colossians 4:5–6: “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without... Let your speech be always with grace.”

Apology II Original Sin

¹⁸ This the Scripture shows when it says that man was created **in the image of God and after his likeness (Gen. 1:27). What else is this than that a wisdom and righteousness was implanted in man that would grasp God and reflect him, that is, that man received gifts like the knowledge of God, fear of God, and trust in God? ...**

Image of God:
Wisdom and Righteousness

²⁴ This is precisely the intention of Augustine’s definition that original sin is concupiscence.... ²⁶ In our definition of original sin, therefore, we have correctly expressed both elements: lack of ability to trust, fear, or love God; and concupiscence, which pursues carnal ends contrary to the Word of God (that is, not only the desires of the body but also **carnal wisdom and righteousness in which it trusts while it despises God**).

Original Sin:
Carnal Wisdom and
Carnal Righteousness

Large Catechism, 4th petition

⁷⁶ Let us outline very briefly how comprehensively this petition covers all kinds of relations on earth. Out of it one might make a long prayer, enumerating with many words all the things ^(tr-721) it includes. For example, we might ask God to give us food and drink, clothing, house, home, and a sound body; to cause the grain and fruits of the field to grow and yield richly; to help us manage our household well and give and preserve to us a good wife, children, and servants; to cause our work, craft, or occupation, whatever it may be, to prosper and succeed; to grant us faithful neighbors and good friends, etc. ⁷⁷ **Again, to ask God to endow the emperor, kings, and all estates of men, and especially our princes, counselors, magistrates, and officials, with wisdom, strength, and prosperity to govern well and to be victorious over the Turks and all our enemies; to grant their subjects and the people at large to live together in obedience, peace, and concord.** ⁷⁸ On the other hand, to protect us from all kinds of harm to our body and our livelihood, from tempest, hail, fire, and flood; from poison, pestilence, and cattle-plague; from war and bloodshed, famine, savage beasts, wicked men, etc. ⁷⁹ It is good to impress upon the common people that all these things come from God and that we must pray for them.

Wisdom in Vocation

Preface to the Books of Solomon, 1545 (1534)

Three books bear the name of Solomon.⁶⁰ The first is *Proverbia*, “Proverbs” [*die Sprüche*]. It may properly be called a book of good works, for in it he teaches how to lead a good life before God and the world.

He pays special attention to the young people. In fatherly fashion he instructs them in God’s commandments, with reassuring promises of how well things shall be with the righteous, and threats as to how the wicked will have to be punished. For young people are of themselves inclined to all evil. Because of their inexperience, they do not understand the wiles and wickedness of the world and the devil. They are far too weak to withstand bad examples and the causes of offense, neither are they able to govern themselves. If they are not instructed, they are mined and lost even before they get their bearings.⁶¹

Therefore young people need and must have teachers and rulers who will exhort, warn, rebuke, and chastise them, who will hold them constantly to the fear of God and to his commandments in order to ward off the devil, the world, and the flesh. This, then, is what Solomon does abundantly and with all diligence in this book. He puts his teaching into proverbs, so that it can be grasped the more easily and kept the more readily. Anyone who intends to become righteous might well take this as a handbook or prayerbook for his daily use, read it often, and ponder his own life in it.

For a man must go one of two ways: either he must let his father chastise him or he must let the executioner punish him. As they say, “You may escape me, but you will not escape the hangman.”⁶² And it would be good to impress this constantly on the young people, so that they might know without any doubt that they must suffer either the father’s rod or the executioner’s sword, just as, in this book, Solomon is constantly threatening the disobedient with death. There is no other way out, for God leaves nothing unpunished. We see in our own experience that disobedient knaves perish in strange ways; they finally come into the executioner’s hands just when they least expect it and feel most secure. Public testimony and signs of all this are the gallows, wheels, and places of execution at the gates of all the cities. Through his temporal government God has put them there to terrify all those who will not obey their elders and let themselves be instructed in God’s word.

Therefore in this book Solomon calls **all those who despise God’s word “fools,”** and all those who deport themselves according to God’s commandments “wise.” This does not apply solely to young people—though it is primarily they whom he has undertaken to teach—but to people of all stations from the highest to the very lowest. For just as youth has its own particular offenses against God’s commandments, so every other group has its vices as well; and these are worse than the vices of youth. As they say, “The older they are, the worse they get”;⁶³ and again, “Age is no cure for folly.”⁶⁴

Even if there were nothing evil in the other and higher stations, no greed, pride, hatred, envy, etc., nevertheless **this one vice would be bad enough, namely, that they try to be shrewd and smart when they ought not to be; everybody is inclined to do something else than what is committed to him, and to leave undone that which is committed to him.** For example, whoever is in the spiritual office tries to be wise and active in the worldly office, and there is no end to his wisdom in this regard; in turn, whoever is in the worldly office has a head too small to hold all his superfluous knowledge about the conduct of the spiritual office.

Of such fools all lands, all cities, all homes are full, and in this book they are diligently rebuked. **Everyone is exhorted to take care of his own affairs and to do faithfully and diligently that which is committed to him;** there is indeed no virtue beyond that of obedience,

attending to that which is given him to do. Such people are called wise men; the disobedient are called fools, even though they do not want to be, or be called, disobedient men or fools.

The second book is called *Qoheleth*, the one we call “The Preacher.”⁶⁵ It is a book of comfort. **When a man would live an obedient life according to the teaching of the first book [Proverbs] and attend to his duty or office**, then the devil, the world, and his own flesh put up so much resistance that he becomes weary and discouraged with **his station in life** and regrets everything he has begun, for things simply will not go as he wants them to. Everything becomes a struggle then; dissatisfaction, impatience, and murmuring arise until a man is ready to give up all hope and do nothing more. **For if the devil cannot prevent obedience through covetousness and desire on the right hand, he will hinder it on the left hand through toil and trouble.**

While in the first book [Proverbs] Solomon teaches obedience in the face of mad lust and desire, so in this book he teaches that men are to be patient and steadfast in obedience, in the face of unpleasantness and temptation [*anfechtung*], and ever to wait out the brief hour in peace and joy. What they cannot keep or alter, they are to let go; it will all work out, etc.

The third book [Song of Solomon] is a song of praise, in which Solomon praises God for obedience, as for a gift of God. **For where God is not himself the householder and ruler, there is neither obedience nor peace in any station of life.** But where there is obedience and good governing, there God dwells, he kisses and embraces his dear bride with his word, which is the kiss of his lips. Therefore when things go in a land or a home as nearly as possible according to the first two of these books, then one may well sing this third book and thank God. For God has not only taught us this, but has himself also done it. Amen.¹

Preface to Solomon’s “The Preacher” 1524

For the entire book tends to show that the counsels, plans, and undertakings of men are all in vain and fruitless, and that they always have a different outcome from that which we will and purpose. Thus Solomon would teach us to wait in confident trust⁷⁶ and to let God alone do everything, above and against and without our knowledge and counsel. Therefore you must not understand this book to be reviling God’s creatures when it says, “All is vanity and a striving after wind.”⁷⁷ For God’s creatures are all good, Genesis 1[:31] and II Timothy 4[I Tim. 4:4]; and this book itself says that **a man shall be happy with his wife and enjoy life, etc. [Eccles. 9:9].** It teaches, rather, that **the plans and undertakings of men in their dealings with the creatures all go wrong and are in vain, if one is not satisfied with what is presently at hand but wants to be their master and ruler for the future.** That’s how it always goes—backward—so that a man has had nothing but wasted toil and anxiety; things turn out anyway as God wills and purposes, not as we will and purpose.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.

¹Luther, M. (1999, c1960). Vol. 35: *Luther's works, vol. 35 : Word and Sacrament I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Vol. 35, Page 258-261). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Psalms 130:4 – “But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”

Proverbs 8:13 – “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”

Ecclesiastes 12:13 – “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Micah 6:8 – “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Proverbs 3:3–6 – “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee... In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Proverbs 22:3 – “A **prudent** man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”