

The unfolding of your words gives light.

God's Foolishness

The Wisdom of God

When we speak of the wisdom of God without studying it in the Scriptures it is easy to equate Him with a person who has lived on earth for a long time and can dispense good advice to help you stay out of trouble. Certainly that kind of wisdom has value, but it is only a dim reflection of the attribute of God that enabled Him to create and sustain an orderly universe.

Here is a good definition:

Wisdom is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means.

—A.W. Tozer

The wisdom of God is shown from several angles in Scripture

- His wisdom brought Him to create the universe in the best way it could be created.

O Lord, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; The earth is full of Your possessions. Psalm 104:24

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. Proverbs 3:19

It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens. Jeremiah 10:12

It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding He stretched out the heavens. Jeremiah 51:15

- His wisdom makes Him infinitely aware of truth and perfectly decisive. He is wisdom's only source.

For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 2:6

- His wisdom makes His counsel perfect. That wisdom normally comes through the Scriptures. God never needs a consultant on the correct way to handle any problem.

For this reason also the wisdom of God said, "I will send to them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and *some* they will persecute..." Luke 11:49

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? Romans 11:33-35

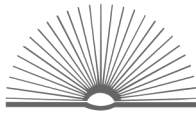
- His wisdom came to earth in the person of Christ. Jesus does not simply possess wisdom, He is wisdom incarnate. His words and His works gave definition to the name *God with us*.

He came to His hometown and *began* teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where *did* this man *get* this wisdom and *these* miraculous powers? Matthew 13:54

The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. Luke 11:31

...but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:24

Because wisdom is an attribute God shares with us, the wisdom of God can shine through His people. You see this several places in Scripture.



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- God's creative wisdom is shown when His people create things for His glory. Bezalel and the other artists who created the beautiful garments and implements for Israel's worship were described by God and Moses as wise in their work.

You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me. Exodus 28:3

See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all *kinds of* craftsmanship. Exodus 31:2-5

Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, "See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. Exodus 35:30-33

- God's infinite awareness is shown when His people lead decisively and solve problems. Joshua, David, Solomon, Ezra and Daniel were worthy of following because God had endowed them with His wisdom.

Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. Deuteronomy 34:9

But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is in the earth. 2 Samuel 14:20

When the queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her. Then she said to the king, "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed *in* wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard. How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually *and* hear your wisdom." 1 Kings 10:4-8

You, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people who are in *the province* beyond the River, *even* all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant *of them*. Ezra 7:25

To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power; even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter. Daniel 2:23

- God's wisdom is shown when His people pass on His counsel to others. The task of Moses was to teach Israel what God taught him. The psalmists did the same as they communicated the wisdom of God through the emotion of music. The persecutors of God's messengers like Stephen have the means to take life but they cannot withstand God's wisdom in them.

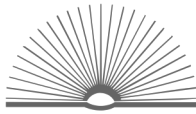
See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. So keep and do *them*, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him? Deuteronomy 4:5-7

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. Psalm 37:30

My mouth will speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart *will be* understanding. Psalm 49:3

But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, *including* both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Acts 6:9-10

- God's wisdom in Christ is realized when His people put their trust in Him.



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The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all who *do His commandments*; His praise endures forever. Psalm 111:10

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor *comes* humility. Proverbs 15:33

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:14-15

The trouble with a fallen world is that we take what is good and twist it to suit our own ends. The wisdom of man distorts the wisdom of God.

- Earthly wisdom is creative, but it creates new ways to sin.

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Romans 1:21-23

- Earthly wisdom is proud, self-reliant, chaotic and sometimes even violent.

You felt secure in your wickedness and said, "No one sees me," your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you; for you have said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me." Isaiah 47:10

Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord. Jeremiah 9:23-24

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:13-18

- Earthly wisdom is foolish and self-preserving. The word in Genesis that describes the serpent as "crafty" is also translated "prudent" in Proverbs. A awareness of danger in your surroundings serves to protect what is good in one setting and to cover up sin in another.

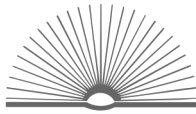
Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. Genesis 3:1

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. Ezekiel 28:17

To someone with an abundance of earthly wisdom, a follower of Christ looks foolish and so does his worldview. That is why the wisdom of God cannot help but take you to the cross.

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come* to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

The only way to get wisdom is from the person revealed in the Bible as Wisdom incarnate. You only get Him when you understand the message of the cross.



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The wisdom of God makes a difference in your life. Here are the best ways to respond to the understanding that only God is truly wise:

1. You seek the kind of wisdom that glorifies Him rather than the kind that makes you look good. You look good dispensing advice but you look godly when you give out God's opinions.
2. You satisfy yourself with His choices. God knows better than you how your life circumstances should look. He is too kind to be cruel and too wise to make mistakes.
3. You find joy in looking foolish for the sake of the gospel. Even the most brilliant minds among the lost will never think their way into the kingdom of God. That is why you need something more powerful than earthly wisdom.

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