

Proverbs chapter 3

Who is speaking, and who are these words spoken to?

Verses 1-12 describe attitudes and actions that could be described as prerequisites to, or components of, wisdom. What is the source of wisdom?

“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom” [13] – is wisdom like a gold nugget or a diamond that can be searched for and picked up and placed in your pocket? Do you just find it laying around in random places?

Verses 13-26 describe a life of great blessing; what is the source of those blessings? Can we count on these blessings as a promise from the Lord?

In verse 1 we find “let your heart keep my commandments”; what specific commands might be in the speaker’s mind? [3, 5-7, 9, 11, (God) 21, 27-31 (man)]

The words “wisdom”, “understanding”, and “knowledge” appear frequently in the proverbs. Are they used interchangeably to provide a more fluid writing style, or do they build a more detailed description of the concepts and processes that relate them to one another?

Certainly wisdom is desirable and encouraged (or even commanded), but is it attainable by all? What does it mean to be wise? What does one do to become wise?

My favorite: 14:10

Challenging: 17:21

Next week: Ecclesiastes chapters 4,11, and 12.

Proverbs 3 – NJPS

- 1 My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your mind retain my commandments;
- 2 For they will bestow on you length of days, Years of life and well-being.
- 3 Let fidelity and steadfastness not leave you; Bind them about your throat, Write them on the tablet of your mind,
- 4 And you will find favor and approbation In the eyes of God and man.
- 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not rely on your own understanding.
- 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths smooth.
- 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and shun evil.
- 8 It will be a cure for your body, A tonic for your bones.
- 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth, With the best of all your income,
- 10 And your barns will be filled with grain, Your vats will burst with new wine.
- 11 Do not reject the discipline of the LORD, my son; Do not abhor His rebuke.
- 12 For whom the LORD loves, He rebukes, As a father the son whom he favors.
- 13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, The man who attains understanding.
- 14 Her value in trade is better than silver, Her yield, greater than gold.
- 15 She is more precious than rubies; All of your goods cannot equal her.
- 16 In her right hand is length of days, In her left, riches and honor.
- 17 Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths, peaceful.
- 18 She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, And whoever holds on to her is happy.
- 19 The LORD founded the earth by wisdom; He established the heavens by understanding;
- 20 By His knowledge the depths burst apart, And the skies distilled dew.
- 21 My son, do not lose sight of them; Hold on to resourcefulness and foresight.
- 22 They will give life to your spirit And grace to your throat.
- 23 Then you will go your way safely And not injure your feet.
- 24 When you lie down you will be unafraid; You will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.
- 25 You will not fear sudden terror Or the disaster that comes upon the wicked,
- 26 For the LORD will be your trust; He will keep your feet from being caught.
- 27 Do not withhold good from one who deserves it When you have the power to do it [for him].
- 28 Do not say to your fellow, "Come back again; I'll give it to you tomorrow," when you have it with you.
- 29 Do not devise harm against your fellow Who lives trustfully with you.
- 30 Do not quarrel with a man for no cause, When he has done you no harm.
- 31 Do not envy a lawless man, Or choose any of his ways;
- 32 For the devious man is an abomination to the LORD, But He is intimate with the straightforward.
- 33 The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the abode of the righteous.
- 34 At scoffers He scoffs, But to the lowly He shows grace.
- 35 The wise shall obtain honor, But dullards get disgrace as their portion.