

TEXT — 8:1-11

1. Doth not wisdom cry,
And understanding put forth her voice?
2. On the top of high places by the way,
Where the paths meet, she standeth;
3. Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud:
4. Unto you, O men, I call:
And my voice is to the sons of men.
5. O ye simple, understand prudence;
And, ye fools, be of an understanding heart.
6. Hear, for I will speak excellent things;
And the opening of my lips shall be right things.
7. For my mouth shall utter truth;
And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
8. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness;
There is nothing crooked or perverse in them.
9. They are all plain to him that understandeth,
And right to them that 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 that may be desired are not to be
compared unto it.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 8:1-11

1. What is the relationship between wisdom and understanding (v. 1)?
2. What is meant by "high places" here (v. 2)?
3. How does wisdom "cry" in these high places (v. 3)?
4. Why do men need great wisdom and understanding (v. 4)?
5. Would having an understanding heart raise these from being simpletons and fools (v. 5)?
6. Is true wisdom ever wrong (v. 6)?
7. Does wisdom ever compromise with wickedness (v. 7)?
8. How would a student of logic designate the two statements in v. 8?
9. Are some things plain to one person that are not to others (v. 9)?

10. In what other passages is wisdom valued greater than earthly treasures (v. 10)?
11. How were rubies used in those days (v. 11)?

PARAPHRASE OF 8:1-11

- 1-11. Can't you hear the voice of wisdom? She is standing at the city gates and at every fork in the road, and at the door of every house. Listen to what she says: "Listen, men!" she calls. "How foolish and naive you are! Let me give you understanding. O foolish ones, let me show you common sense! Listen to me! For I have important information for you. Everything I say is right and true, for I hate lies and every kind of deception. My advice is wholesome and good. There is nothing of evil in it. My words are plain and clear to anyone with half a mind--if it is only open! My instruction is far more valuable than silver or gold." For the value of wisdom is far above rubies; nothing can be compared with it.

COMMENTS ON 8:1-11

V. 1. Wisdom is again personified and is again feminine. Here is Hebrew parallelism in which the second line is a restatement of the first: "wisdom" and "knowledge" go together as do "cry" and "put forth her voice". This section is very similar to Prov. 1:20-22: "Wisdom crieth aloud in the street; She uttereth her voice in the broad places; She crieth in the chief place of concourse; At the entrance of the gates, In the city, she uttereth her words: How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And scoffers delight them in scoffing, And fools hate knowledge?" In 1:20,21 the material is set forth in the declarative mood while 8:1 introduces the material with the interrogative mood. "The interrogative form, which expects an affirmative answer, is a mode of asserting a truth" ("Pulpit Commentary"). However, it is just the opposite in 1:22 and 8:5--Chapter 1 being interrogative and Chapter 8 exclamatory.

V. 2. "She takes her stand...in the most open and elevated parts of the city where she may be best seen and heard by all who pass by...where many paths converge, and where people meet from different quarters" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 3. By lifting up her voice in the gates and doors to the city, she would be heard by all who were coming in and by all

who were going out. It would be for the great who entered and for the lowly who entered. Nor does wisdom speak feebly--she crieth aloud! Most people know what is right and wrong, what is wise and foolish, what should and shouldn't be done. How thankful we should be that wisdom is that prominent!

V. 4. Wisdom and understanding were being spoken about in v. 1-3; now they themselves begin to speak, and their direct quotation runs from this verse through v. 10.

V. 5. More parallelism: "ye simple" and "ye fools" go together, and "understand prudence" and "be of an understanding heart" are parallels. The simple are "those not yet perverted but easily influenced for good or evil". This is where each person begins. If people do not acquire wisdom later on, then they are considered "fools". The interjection form (introduced by "O") shows the urgency of being directed in the right way. "Webster" says of "prudence": "Ability to regulate and discipline oneself through the exercise of the reason."

V. 6. Wisdom also claims to have imparted "excellent" things in Prov. 22:20: "Have I not written unto thee excellent things of counsels and knowledge?" Wisdom is never wrong but always "right". Those who would "excel" must always exalt wisdom.

V. 7. And "truth" is tied in with wisdom and excellence and righteousness. Wisdom always speaks the truth because wickedness (lying, deceit, etc.) is not only foreign to wisdom but is actually abominable to it. Oh, that each of us might be so wise that wickedness is abominable to our lips! Remember this when you find yourself involved in some church-trouble.

V. 8. Yes, and here comes "righteousness" to go along with or be a stronger expression of the "right things" of v. 6. And it is set over against or in contrast to "wickedness" in v. 7. The "all are" of the first statement is what logic calls a "universal positive", and the "nothing is" of the second statement is called a "universal negative". Both of these statements are "absolutes", showing that everything about wisdom is righteous, and nothing about it is wicked.

V. 9. While wisdom may be "too high for a fool" (Prov. 24:7), it is certainly obtainable to one who wishes to see and understand. Our verse describes the type of person we should all be: one who understands because he has been looking for knowledge. To all such, wisdom is "plain", clear, not difficult.

V. 10. With this verse closes the statement by wisdom and understanding that began in v. 4. More parallelism in this verse (find it). The opportunity to learn through "instruction" might be said to be a "silver" opportunity while the actual acquisition of "knowledge" through that instruction may be said to be a "golden" possession. Notice that a knowledge of the true and the right is here said to be a higher goal and a greater possession than wealth.

V. 11. The author of Proverbs here comments on the truthfulness of what wisdom and understanding affirmed in v. 10. He says the possession of wisdom is greater than possessing rubies--or anything else! Similar statements of such evaluation of wisdom: "How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! Yea, to get understanding is rather to be chosen than silver" (Prov. 16:16); "The gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, And the profit thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her" (Prov. 3:14,15); "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; Yea, with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). As valuable as wisdom is, it is not something that can be acquired by money (like some commodity): "It cannot be gotten for gold, Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof" (Job 28:15). Euclid of Alexandria was right of long ago. Called the "father of Geometry", when his "king asked if there were not an easier way to learn geometry than by the study of the 'Elements' (Euclid's set of books), Euclid answered, 'There is no royal road to geometry' ('World Book Encyclopedia').

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 8:1-11

1. These first verses are very similar to what earlier section in Proverbs?
2. Comment on v. 2.
3. By whom would wisdom and understanding be heard, according to v. 3?
4. What begins in v. 4?
5. Comment on "ye simple" (v. 5).
6. Comment on "ye fools" (v. 5).
7. Can you find a quartet of qualities in vs. 6-8 that go together?
8. Comment upon those 4 qualities in their desirableness in

our lives.

9. Contrast v. 9 with Prov. 24:7.
10. What great comparative value is placed upon wisdom and understanding in vs. 10,11, both by their own statement and by the writer's comment?

TEXT — 8:12-21

12. I wisdom have made prudence my dwelling,
And find out knowledge and discretion.
13. The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil:
Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
And the perverse mouth, do I hate.
14. Counsel is mine, and sound knowledge:
I am understanding; I have might.
15. By me kings reign,
And princes decree justice.
16. By me princes rule,
And nobles, even all the judges of the earth.
17. I love them that love me;
And those that seek me diligently shall find me.
18. Riches and honor are with me;
Yea, durable wealth and righteousness.
19. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold;
And my revenue than choice silver.
20. I walk in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice;
21. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance,
And that I may fill their treasuries.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 8:12-21

1. Whom did Paul say should be discreet (v. 12)?
2. What other passages show God to have likes and dislikes (v. 13)?
3. Show that understanding is power (v. 14).
4. Do people accept leadership whose wisdom they do not respect (v. 15)?
5. Does v. 16 mean there has never been a noble or judge who was not wise?
6. What is the adverb modifying "seek" in v. 17?
7. What are the parallel words within v. 18?

8. How did "gold", "fine gold," and "choice silver" sound to the ancients (v. 19)?
9. Is there any difference between "righteousness" and "justice" (v. 20)?
10. Cite an example in your own community of one to whom wisdom brought wealth (v. 21).

PARAPHRASE OF 8:12-21

- 12,13. Wisdom and good judgment live together, for wisdom knows where to discover knowledge and understanding. If anyone respects and fears God, he will hate evil. For wisdom hates pride, arrogance, corruption and deceit of every kind.
- 14-21. "I, Wisdom, give good advice and common sense. Because of my strength, kings reign in power. I show the judge who is right and who is wrong. Rulers rule well with my help. I love all who love me. Those who search for me shall surely find me. Unending riches, honor, justice and righteousness are mine to distribute. My gifts are better than the purest gold or sterling silver! My paths are those of justice and right. Those who love and follow me are indeed wealthy. I fill their treasuries.

COMMENTS ON 8:12-21

V. 12. Again personified wisdom speaks after a one-verse break. Its personification is carried a step farther by speaking of her as "dwelling" in prudence. Her quest for "knowledge" and "discretion" are successful.

V. 13. One hates evil who fears Jehovah because he views evil from God's viewpoint: he knows how wrong it is, how contrary to God, and what it will result in. Prov. 16:6 says, "By the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil." That God hates "pride and arrogancy", Prov. 6:16,17 says, "There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes..." The "evil way", by virtue of its location in the sentence, must be the wicked things that grow out of pride and arrogancy (like Prov. 13:10: "By pride cometh only contention"). A "perverse" mouth is a mouth that is perverted from its intended speech. That God also hates such a mouth, Prov. 4:24 says, "Perverse lips put far from thee".

V. 14. Wisdom's "counsel" should be heard because wisdom has "sound knowledge". Pardon us, but many who counsel with young people and others sometimes give the wierdest advice. In short, such should not be counselors at all. Understanding claims to possess "might", and indeed it does; it is power. With it, one is prepared; without it, one is defeated. "Clarke" observes: "It enables man to bring everything to his aid: to construct machines by which one man can do the work of hundreds." No wonder that "Bacon" said, "Knowledge is power."

V. 15. Saul may have been king, but when he was going so absolutely against wisdom in a case involving Jonathan, he found out that the people--not he--reigned under that condition (I Sam. 14:23-45). When Rehoboam was not wise in not listening to the advice of his elders, he did not rule the whole kingdom but lost control of ten-twelfths of it (I Kings 12:16,17).

V. 16. The thought of this verse is mostly a repetition of the thought in v. 15. Even parents will find out in time that unless their decisions make sense, their children will rebel and not submit to their rule.

V. 17. Wisdom is good to those who love it. Wisdom is something to be sought and to be sought diligently. This is the way Solomon sought it, and God answered his prayer for it (I Kings 3:9).

V. 18. Wisdom is more valuable than silver and gold (vs. 10,11) and cannot be purchased with gold or silver (Job 28:15), and yet credit it with bringing both riches and honor to its possessor. Since the wealth is spoken of in connection with "righteousness", it is spoken of as "durable" or enduring and not passing.

V. 19. While "gold", "fine gold", and "silver" are among the products of wisdom (see "riches" and "wealth" in v. 18), they must be among the lesser valued "fruit" of wisdom. Other fruits of wisdom must be considered greater. Some of them are mentioned in the next verse.

V. 20. One who walks with and by wisdom will walk in the way of "righteousness" and in the paths of "justice".

V. 21. Again the acquisition of wealth can be one of the results of having wisdom. "Fools" and "money" don't go together ("A fool and his money are soon parted," says an old saying), but wisdom and money do.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 8:12-21

1. Note the personification of wisdom in v. 12.
2. Why does one who fears God hate evil (v. 13)?
3. What makes wisdom a good counselor (v. 14)?
4. How was King Saul unwise in dealing with his son Jonathan (v. 15)?
5. What about parents and unwise decisions (v. 16)?
6. To whom is wisdom good (v. 17)?
7. Can one be both righteous and wealthy (v. 18)?
8. Is wealth the greatest fruit of wisdom (v. 19)?
9. What way and paths does wisdom walk (v. 20)?
10. Comment on wisdom and wealth going together (v. 21).

TEXT — 8:22-36

22. Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way,
Before his works of old.
23. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Before the earth was.
24. When there were no depths, I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
25. Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth;
26. While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.
27. When he established the heavens, I was there:
When he set a circle upon the face of the deep,
28. When he made firm the skies above,
When the fountains of the deep became strong,
29. When he gave to the sea its bound,
That the waters should not transgress his commandment,
When he marked out the foundations of the earth;
30. Then I was by him, as a master workman;
And I was his daily delight,
Rejoicing always before him.
31. Rejoicing in his habitable earth;
And my delight was with the sons of men.
32. Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me;
For blessed are they that keep my ways.
33. Hear instruction, and be wise,
And refuse it not.
34. Blessed is the man that heareth me,

- Watching daily at my gates,
 Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35. For whoso findeth me findeth life,
 And shall obtain favor of Jehovah.
36. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul:
 All they that hate me love death.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 8:22-36

1. Comment on God's wisdom (v. 22).
2. Are we to conceive of "everlasting" as having existed before time was (v. 23)?
3. What "fountains" are referred to in v. 24?
4. What is meant by the mountains being "settled" in v. 25?
5. Where else does the Bible tell of God's creating the universe (besides here in this section)?
6. What word in v. 27 is especially noticeable?
7. What is meant by "firm" in v. 28?
8. Is there a definite line where the ocean stops (v. 29)?
9. Who is the "master workman" in v. 30--wisdom or God?
10. Does "daily" refer to the creation-days of Gen. 1 (v. 30)?
11. What is the force of "habitable" in v. 31?
12. In what ways "blessed" (v. 32)?
13. Hear and be wise, but don't refuse and be (v. 33).
14. How does "watching" enter in (v. 34)?
15. What two blessings are promised in v. 35?
16. How can one sin against wisdom (v. 36)?

PARAPHRASE OF 8:22-36

- 22-26. The Lord formed me in the beginning, before He created anything else. From ages past, I am. I existed before the earth began. I lived before the oceans were created, before the springs bubbled forth their waters onto the earth; before the mountains and the hills were made. Yes, I was born before God made the earth and fields, and high plateaus.
- 27-32. I was there when He established the heavens and formed the great springs in the depths of the oceans. I was there when He set the limits of the seas and gave them His instructions not to spread beyond their

boundaries. I was there when He made the blueprint for the earth and oceans. I was always at His side like a little child. I was His constant delight, laughing and playing in His presence. And how happy I was with what He created--His wise world and all His family of mankind! And so, young men, listen to me, for how happy are all who follow my instructions.

33-36. Listen to my counsel--oh, don't refuse it--and be wise. Happy is the man who is so anxious to be with me that he watches for me daily at my gates, or waits for me outside my home! For whoever finds me finds life and wins approval from the Lord. But the one who misses me has injured himself irreparably. Those who refuse me show that they love death.

COMMENTS ON 8:22-36

V. 22. Wisdom is still speaking. Wisdom is not something new, something that only recently came along. It takes precedence in value over other things by virtue of its existence before there was anything here and because it is an attribute of God.

V. 23. Wisdom is "from everlasting", "from the beginning," "before the earth was." What else can claim existence that far back? Only those things that are other attributes of God (such as His "power"), for He alone existed.

V. 24. The Bible often divides the creation of the universe into three parts: heaven, earth and sea (Neh. 9:6; Exo. 20:11; Rev. 14:7; and others). Beginning with this verse these three are considered with being of shorter duration than wisdom: sea (this verse), earth (vs. 25,26), and heaven (v. 27).

V. 25. We use the mountains and hills as a gauge for comparing something that is old in our saying, "As old as the hills." But wisdom existed even before there were any hills!

V. 26. If wisdom had not been an attribute of God, earth would have been uninhabitable by man, there would have been nothing for him to eat or wear, etc.

V. 27. Isa. 40:22 also speaks of the "circle" of the earth.

V. 28. Ever hear a child ask, "What if the sky fell down upon us?" God made it "firm" over our heads. The "fountains of the deep" are the "springs of the sea" mentioned in Job 38:16. Their strength mentioned here was manifested in the days of

Noah when they burst forth at the special decree of God and, joined with the water that poured down for forty days and nights when the "windows of heaven" were opened, helped flood the earth until even the mountains were covered (Gen. 7:11,19).

V. 29. Go to any beach or seacoast, and you can observe the definite line where the ocean waters stop in their ebb and flow and in their swellings during great storms. Similarly does Job 38:8,10,11 say that God "shut up the sea with doors" and "marked out for it a bound, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves by stayed." The "foundation" of the earth (or "foundations" of the earth in Job 38:4) is evidently to be taken figuratively and not literally since the Bible speaks of God's hanging the earth on nothing--suspended it in space (Job 26:7). What, then, is meant by the foundation or foundations of the earth? "Clarke" takes a stab at the subject: "Those irreversible laws by which all motions are governed...the principles on which it is constructed, and the laws by which it is governed."

V. 30. God has His wisdom "with" Him in all of His creative acts. This is what made everything "good" that He created. See the reference to this after the various days of creation (Gen. 1:10,12, etc.). "Daily" in our verse is reminiscent of the creative days of Gen. 1.

V. 31. God made the earth as a dwellingplace (Isa. 45:18) whereas, as far as we know, the other planets were not so prepared. The finale of God's creation, the climax of it all, was the creation of man (Gen. 1:26), mentioned in our verse.

V. 32. If wisdom is that ancient; if wisdom is an eternal attribute of God; if wisdom was back there with God when everything was being created, then people should listen when wisdom speaks. In our verse wisdom says, "Hearken unto me...keep my ways," and a blessing is pronounced upon those who do.

V. 33. Another verse connecting our being wise with hearing, and not refusing, instruction. It is the foolish, not the wise, who refuse wisdom and instruction (Prov. 1:8).

V. 34. One who seeks wisdom lives in a state of expectation and anticipation. He watches and waits. "Waiting" is often involved in "watching" as in the cat patiently watching for a mouse or as in Christians watching for their Lord's return.

V. 35. A double blessing ultimately comes to those who through watching and waiting find wisdom: "life" (both here and

hereafter, both spiritual and eternal) and the "favor of Jehovah" (the greatest possession that one can have).

V. 36. One can sin against wisdom in several ways: by not desiring it, by not seeking after it, by not listening when it speaks, by not believing what it says, by not doing what it commands, by not desiring what it promises, and by not heeding its warnings. In which ever way or if in all ways one sins against wisdom, he is not merely wronging wisdom: he is wronging his own soul--he will be the one who suffers for it. Put very bluntly wisdom summarizes: "All they that hate me love death." This statement exemplifies the fact that truth itself is blunt, unflinching, unbending, no respecter of persons.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 8:22-36

1. Wisdom is not something (v. 22).
2. In order to have existed as far back as wisdom, something had to be an attribute of (v. 23).
3. The Bible often divides the creation of the universe into what three divisions (v. 24)?
4. What is older than the hills (v. 25)?
5. Would the earth have been habitable by man if wisdom had not been with God in creating it (v. 26)?
6. What other passage speaks of the "circle" of the earth (v. 27)?
7. What does v. 28 assure us about the sky?
8. Where else are the "fountains of the deep" mentioned (v. 28)?
9. Cite the proof of the truth in v. 29 about the sea.
10. Is "foundation" in v. 29 to be taken literally or figuratively?
11. Tie up v. 30 with Gen. 1.
12. Comment on v. 31.
13. According to v. 32, why should we listen to wisdom?
14. Who receive and who do not receive instruction (v. 33)?
15. Give an example of "waiting and watching" (v. 34).
16. According to v. 35, why should we seek wisdom?
17. What two blunt statements does wisdom make in v. 36?