

## **FOUNDATION OF WISDOM IN CHRIST JESUS (PROVERBS 16)**

Two years ago we had a wonderful summer in the Psalms. While I confess that if I were to be stranded on an island with only one book of the Bible, the Psalms would be high up on my list of preferred Scripture. Like **Psalm 18** that begins, "I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my Rock and my Fortress and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust; my Shield and the Horn of my salvation, my Stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies." (**Psalm 18:1-3**)

Nevertheless though, it is turning out for us to be a summer of Solomon, or wisdom that God gave King Solomon. With the Proverbs, that were mostly from King Solomon, who was the son of King David, there is a treasure trove of wisdom, waiting for us to mine, that is from God. As God had said to Solomon, "I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you." (**1 Kings 3:12**)

That is a person of whom we should respect for what he has to say, despite his shortcomings, or sins against God. His father King David also committed some, of what would be called, egregious sins (conspicuously bad or offensive; flagrant<sup>1</sup>-like a flagrant foul in basketball only much worse). Yet with David, when he was called out on his sins against God, he was quick to repent and turn to God for forgiveness. Primarily, we know of King David having Uriah, one of his mighty men, killed in battle because David had gotten his wife Bathsheba pregnant. That child ended up dying because of that. (**2 Samuel 11-12**) David also is known to have counted his troops, contrary to the will of God to just trust in Him, which brought on the wrath of God, of which we are told 70,000 people died in the plague from that. (**2 Samuel 24**) For us, we certainly are not in that kind of position of which 10's or 100's of thousands of people are affected by our actions, but then again, only God knows the effects that are manifested by the good and the bad or evil that we do.

We are told that initially "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he **sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.**" (**1 Kings 3:3**) That was what started out as a benign situation, "having little or no detrimental effect; harmless"<sup>2</sup>. But as we have learned from the story of King Saul, when he took it upon himself to do the sacrifice instead of Samuel, who was the judge, priest, and prophet of that time, Saul's kingdom was taken away from him, and given to David. Solomon was the king and not the priest (**Leviticus 17:8-9**), and what started out as benign for Solomon, became a malignant problem later on. Meaning, it spread and became a dangerous problem, to Solomon and to all of God's people. We read further, "For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David" (**1 Kings 11:4**),

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1 <https://www.wordnik.com/words/egregious>

2 <https://www.wordnik.com/words/benign>

of which Solomon set up idols on the high places to other gods for his wives, of which he was stripped of most of his kingdom by God, as his son Rehoboam ended up with only one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Fortunately, it seems to be the case, that by the goodness of God, Solomon also was led back to repentance (**Romans 2:4**), as he then gave us a bit of an autobiography in the book of **Ecclesiastes**. To which, it can be said, it is not too late to repent and turn to God for forgiveness through Christ Jesus, until IT IS too late. As the Apostle Paul says, "We then, as workers together with Him [Christ Jesus] also plead with you **not to receive the grace of God in vain**. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (**2 Corinthians 6:1-2**) Tomorrow may be too late! To go along with that, speaking of that phrase "in vain", Paul, says "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that **your labor is not in vain in the Lord**" (**1 Corinthians 15:58**) Also, as God promises, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (**Isaiah 55:11**) "Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, **His reward** is with Him, and **His work** before Him.'" (**Isaiah 62:11**) I hope we all know by now, that for us who have believed on Christ Jesus and have received Him, to be as Jesus said "born-again", we are not doing works to be saved. We are doing works because we are saved. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**)

There is though, a distinct difference in the writings of King David from the writings of King Solomon, like what I just had read in **Psalms 18**, versus the Proverbs. As we have been looking at the book of Ecclesiastes the past five weeks, written presumably by King Solomon, he started with, in **Ecclesiastes 1:2**, "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." "Hebel"=emptiness, futile, meaningless.<sup>3</sup> Of course, we can deduce that he is using hyperbole to make a point. As later, Solomon says "Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God." (**Ecclesiastes 2:24**) And "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." (**James 1:17**) The greatest of gifts from God is the gift of salvation that we have in Christ Jesus! Solomon later then summarizes his message in **Ecclesiastes** by saying, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep

3 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/1892.htm>

His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, **including every secret thing**, whether **GOOD** or evil." (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**)

In **1 Corinthians 3:11**, the Apostle Paul said, "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is **Jesus Christ**." The Apostle Paul also said, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the **foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (**Ephesians 2:19-21**) Then, Jesus joins those metaphors together in agreement by saying, in **Luke 6:47-49**, "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and **DOES THEM**, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the **foundation on the Rock** [Petra]. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was **founded on the Rock**. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great." While metaphors have their place, one's understanding can get lost in the mixing of metaphors or illustrations. But with the case of the digging deep and laying our foundation on the Rock, it is God who is leading us TO dig deep and lay our foundation, which is actually the Word that Jesus gave His apostles and prophets. And that foundation is on THE ROCK! MY POINT: Paul said, "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15**)

There is but one way to make it through the not-so proverbial but literal fire. We have that in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, also known as Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (**Daniel 1:7**) When they were thrown into the fiery furnace because they did not worship Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, they were seen to be walking around in that fiery furnace with a fourth person [Christ Jesus]. Ultimately, that is an image of what is to come. **Revelation 20:11-15**, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works [remember,

we are His workmanship], by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." We have a blessed assurance, as the Apostle Paul says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself **through Jesus Christ**, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that **God was in Christ** reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though **God were pleading through us**: we implore you on Christ's behalf, **be reconciled to God**. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the **righteousness of God in Him.**" (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may **know that you have eternal life**, and that you may **continue to believe** in the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:11-13)

Now Solomon tells us in **Proverbs 8:13**, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil [not those who do evil]; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." **Proverbs 1:7**, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." **Proverbs 9:10**, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Yet, we are ultimately not being motivated by fear. The Apostle John tells us "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18) We are responding to the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. (John 3:16-17) We are recognizing that the Law=death, but responding to the Love=life.

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**[Proverbs 16:1-3 (Committing to the Lord)]** The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits. **Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.**

[That includes then, spending time in God's Word and in prayer. Jesus said, "**I AM the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away [or lifts up]; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of**

itself, unless it abides in the Vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. **I AM the Vine**, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit [abides=meno: abide, continue, dwell, endure, remain]; for **without Me you can do nothing**. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them **into the fire**, and they are burned." (John 15:1-6) So that answer of the tongue being from the Lord is only applicable to those who are wholly committed to the Lord. We are following the example of Christ Jesus who did not revile in return, etc. (1 Peter 2:21-25) Those not committed to the Lord, Jesus says of them, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:18-23) Of which, not only do they defile one's self, but also cause a rippling effect of damage to others. Solomon continues:]

**[Proverbs 16:4 (Committing to the Lord)]** The Lord has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.

[He is speaking of willful and impenitent sinners. The Apostle Paul says it like this, "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ **depart from iniquity**." But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter [dishonor], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:19-21)].

**[Proverbs 16:5-6 (Committing to the Lord)]** Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though they join forces, none will go unpunished. In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.

["This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship ["koinonia": fellowship, sharing, contribution, participation] with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the

Righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1 John 1:5-2:6) Meaning, our actions speak louder than just mere words!

**[Proverbs 16:7-9 (Committing to the Lord)]** When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Better is a little with righteousness, than vast revenues without justice. A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

[Jesus had said, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:22-23) Jesus also said there will be those who will "say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'" (Luke 13:26-27) Both accounts Jesus declared that He didn't know them and said they were workers of iniquity (adikia=not-justice) or lawlessness (anomia=not-law). Now the Apostle Paul clears that up for us in saying, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2) As Jesus declared, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:27-28)]

**[Proverbs 16:10-15 (Honoring the King)]**

Divination is on the lips of the king; his mouth must not transgress in judgment. [Ie-Rulers are accountable to God also] Honest weights and scales are the Lord's; all the weights in the bag are His work. [And we can trust that God is perfect in all of His Ways (2 Samuel 22:31) and His Works (Deuteronomy 32:4).] It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and they love him who speaks what is right. As messengers of death is the king's wrath, but a wise man will appease it. In the light of the king's face is life, and his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain. [And how much more to honor the King of kings and Lord of Lords, to go along with respecting those of whom He has put in authority, as long as we don't compromise who we are in Christ, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Yet it is also important for us to be praying for them and for our community and our nation. As Daniel spoke to King

Nebuchadnezzar, concerning his dream, Daniel said, ""Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him." (**Daniel 2:20-22**)]

**[Proverbs 16:16 (Wisdom and Understanding)]** How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. [Jesus is for us Wisdom from God, and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption- that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (**1 Corinthians 1:30-31**)]

**[Proverbs 16:17-33 (Depart from Evil)]** The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; he who keeps his way preserves his soul. [As Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (**John 14:6**)] Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. He who heeds the Word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the Lord, **happy is he**. The wise in heart will be called prudent, and sweetness of the lips increases learning. Understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it. But the correction of fools is folly. The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips. Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. The person who labors, labors for himself, for his hungry mouth drives him on. An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a **burning fire**. A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends. A violent man entices his neighbor, and leads him in a way that is not good. He winks his eye to devise perverse things; he purses his lips and brings about evil. The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness. He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and **he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city**. The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. [based on our response!]

Jesus prayed, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent [within themselves] and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest**. Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find **rest for your souls**. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (**Matthew 11:25-30**)