

The Knowledge of Good and Evil

Chapter 1

“God or Human Perception”

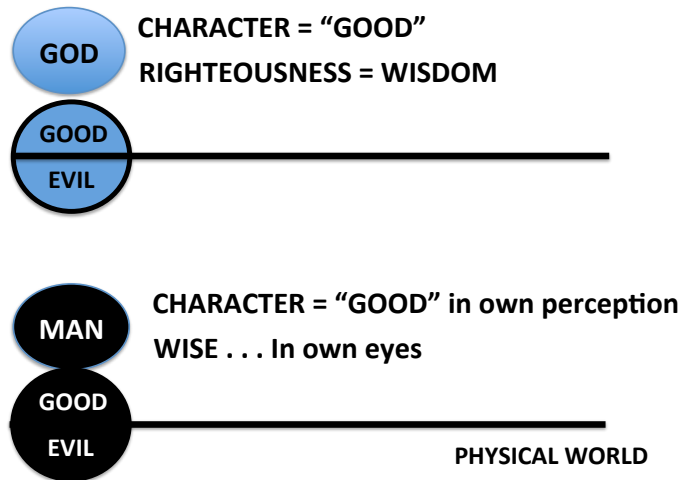
Wisdom or Folly

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Character . . . the heart . . . the desires . . . the motivation . . . wisdom. These are all words for the same thing. Within man is a basic drive. It is what makes him do what he does. It is what tells him what is right and what is wrong. It is his wisdom. In fact, everything that a man does is motivated by this character, his desires, his heart, his very own wisdom.

Man has a character. So also God has a character. They are as different as night and day. God’s motivation, His desires, His wisdom, is what is “good.” He alone determines what is good and what is evil. Unfortunately man also has a character but it is totally different than God’s. It also (man’s character) determines what is good and what is evil. Man’s character is focused on glorifying himself and determines what is good and what is evil for his own benefit. God’s character glorifies God. Man’s character glorifies man.

So there are two different characters, God’s and man’s. The Biblical Story will show that each determines good and evil differently. They each have a different understanding, a different perception, a different “knowledge of good and evil.” This is the problem. Note well, that there is no overlap. No “human wisdom” at its best ever merges in any way with the wisdom of God (“revelation”). While some things may seem similar, the motivations are diametrically opposite.



God's character as the Determiner of Good and Evil

Of course, there cannot be two correct standards of good and evil. There is only one. God as the source of everything is also the source of determining the only standard of good and evil. He alone has the correct knowledge of good and evil.

"In the beginning, God . . ."

In the beginning there was only God. There was only His character. Everything that came about, comes about, or will come about, is sourced from God. Everything that He creates is for Him and from Him. In Genesis chapter one and two God created a physical universe. His desire was that this universe would represent His character desires, and His alone.

"God Saw" (God evaluated)

As God began to act to create this universe, the Scripture states that "God saw . . ." The phrase "God saw . . ." means that God evaluated and determined . . . He perceived . . . In other words, God perceived the situation correctly and then pronounced that it measured up entirely with His own character desires that were "good." Thus the creation was "good" as determined by God.

It would be as if someone, after a particularly eventful day, said, "I can see that this was a good day." They actually aren't talking about seeing the whole day with their eyes, but they are saying that they are evaluating the value of the day. They also aren't referring to the specific events of the day,

driving their car, going to work, or eating. They are talking about the value of those events as they benefitted their values, or fulfilled their expectations of what was “good” about life. The point is that they “saw,” or evaluated, the value of the events based on their own desires, hopes and dreams, and came to a value judgment.

“. . . that it was good!” God’s Wisdom

God looked at what He had created and called it “good.” That meant that His evaluation of His handiwork was that it was exactly what He wanted. It fulfilled His desires exactly. As God is “good,” so now this creation was “good.” “Good” is what God is. This “good” is God’s character. It is His desires. Just as one’s character is how one thinks or is one’s wisdom, so God’s character is how He thinks, or His Wisdom. It is His perception of what is right and what is wrong, or “good and evil.”

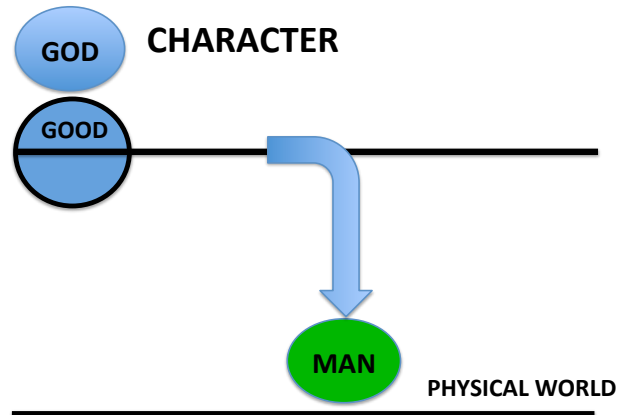
One might wonder how it is that God gets to evaluate His own character, since it is obvious that He would evaluate Himself as “good.” But that is the point. God is the only One. He is the source of everything. Thus everything He creates must reflect His character, that is, it must be “good.” The creation thus is “very good.”

While this might not seem fair with respect to human perception, there is no other choice. Man’s perception comes from his own character and he makes judgments based on his perception. Man has no other choice since he is locked into his own perception, or his own value system. God’s character must be assessed from some value system. And whichever value system evaluates Him, the conclusion will be based on that perception. There is no generic good and evil floating out in the universe that somehow magically applies both to God and to man so that both God and man are judged by this value system. Good and evil are established from a standard of someone’s perception from someone’s character. This perception must be from God’s character alone, not man’s.

Often one will hear how people assess the God of the Bible as “too violent,” or “too intolerant.” The question is, from which value system are they evaluating God? It is their own. Thus the God of the Bible is being evaluated from a perception that is not His. But this is a faulty evaluation since God is the sole determiner of “good and evil,” not man. Thus man has absolutely no ability to assess God from his own perspective. One can only assess God from God’s perception since that is, by definition, the only perception that is valid.

“Let Us make man in Our Image”

When God came to to the sixth day, He made man. Since God had created this universe to reflect His desires, to glorify Himself, He appointed man to be in charge of doing exactly that. This is what is called, “ruling in His image (1:26).” When God made man in His “image,” it meant that man was to represent God’s desires (His character) perfectly as he ruled over this earth. Thus, man’s desires needed to match up with God’s desires and must be “good,” as God determined “good.”



Evil?

If God is good and He created man, and man was good, then where did evil enter the picture? Evil is the opposite and the absence of “good.” If man does God’s desires (“good”) then that is “good.” If he disobeys or does not do what God desires, then that is “evil.” So “evil” very simply is the rejection of what is “good,” or godly.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

I often tell my class to imagine that there is a tree planted in the front of the room. Then I ask them the following question. If its name was the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,” what do you think you would get if you ate the fruit? Of course, the reply is “. . . the knowledge of good and evil.” That seems very obvious and the obvious is exactly the interpretation desired.

But this somewhat stymies the class, since it might seem that Adam and Eve already knew what good and evil was? Obviously good was doing what God said, “Cultivate the garden and keep it” (2:15). And they knew what “evil” was as well. It would be to go against God’s “good” desires and to eat the fruit of the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” Thus if they already knew what “good and evil” was,

what knowledge would they gain if they ate of that fruit?

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." (2:16-17)

Thus they did know what good and evil was, and death would be the result of doing “evil.” God had determined it. God determined everything. They could do good and eat of any tree, or they could eat of the forbidden tree and that would be evil.

“The Knowledge of Good and Evil:” Man’s wisdom

So, if they already knew what was “good” and what was “evil,” what was this “Knowledge of Good and Evil” that they would gain if they ate the fruit? What was it that they would get that they did not already have?

Remember the discussion that God’s character determined what was good, and also determined that anything different from that was evil? If man could determine for himself what was good and what was evil apart from God’s determination then he would, by definition, know, or determine it, for himself. In fact, this is the definition of what a “god” is. That is, a “god” is one who determines “good and evil” for oneself.

Having received his instruction on God’s desires, man was now faced with an alternative. He could choose to do God’s desires . . . “good.” Or he could do Satan’s desires . . . “evil.” But if he ate of that tree . . . he would have Satan’s character (doing the desires of Satan). It would become his very own character and that character would determine good and evil for itself. No longer would he be subject to God’s determination of good and evil. He would be able decide for himself. He would think himself to be “free.” But what he didn’t realize was that what he perceived as “free” would actually be enslavement to an evil character, a character from Satan himself. (Note that one is always “enslaved” to their own character, whether it be good or whether it be evil).

Peter talks about this evil character and its claim to be free while it actually was enslaved to its own evil character.

¹⁸ For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, ¹⁹ promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. (2 Peter 2:18-19)

Thus, when Eve determined that eating of The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was “good” (“she saw that it was good”), it was different than what God had

determined (“saw”) was “good.” In other words, if they ate it they would get a different character from God’s, a character that perceived (evaluated) things from their own interests, not God’s. They would determine good and evil for themselves. But since they were opposed to God’s character they would now determine that what was really “evil” was good, and what God had determined as “good” was now evil (since God, not man, truly determined “good and evil”).

Isaiah speaks to exactly this when he states,

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! ²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!

(Isaiah 5:20-21)

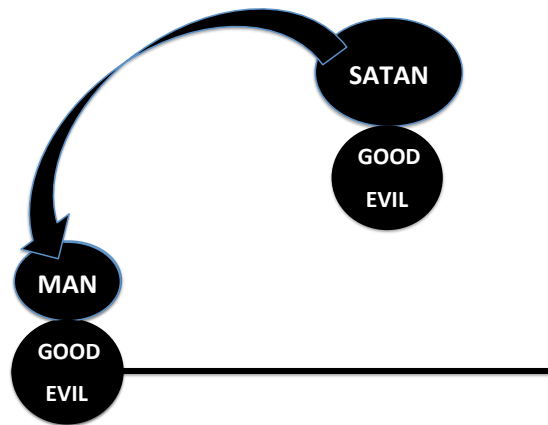
Man’s Wisdom from Satan

“Now the serpent was wiser than all the beasts of the field . . . “

At this point suffice it to say, that the reader is introduced to the antagonist, the evil character who is the opposite of the good character, God. Of course this is Satan operating inside this serpent in order to lure Eve into eating of the restricted tree. Satan is the antagonist to God. His character is evil. His “wise” (Genesis 3:1) character already¹ determines good and evil for itself and thus opposes how God “sees” things. That he is the antagonist to God is clear as he directly opposes God’s revelation of His character by saying, “Has God said . . . “ and “you shall not surely die . . . “ Thus this serpent (Satan) possesses a wisdom that is the opposite of God, that determines “good and evil” on his own from his value system.

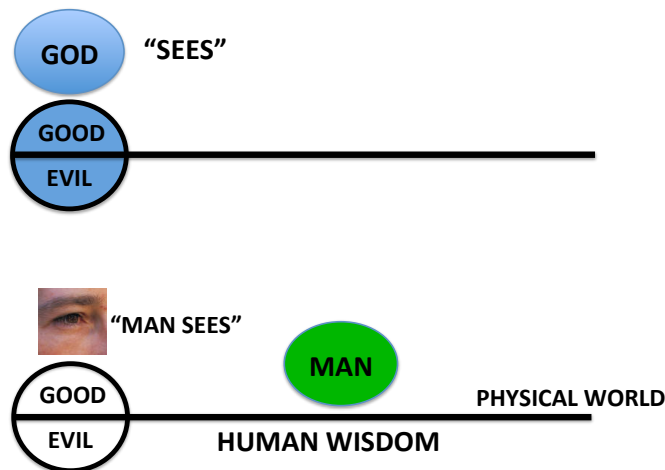
So, this serpent explains to Eve how he “sees” (determines) things and thus how she should “see” (determine) things. She takes the bait. She now looks at (evaluates) the restricted food and determines from the deceit of Satan that rejecting God is now a good thing (so that she can be her own “god”).

¹ The question will most certainly arise as to how and when Satan got this evil character. At this point the text does not reveal that answer. Suffice it to say, that Satan has determined to lead Adam and Eve astray and thus already has a character that is opposed to God’s character.



Eve Determines good and evil for herself from Satan's deceitful character

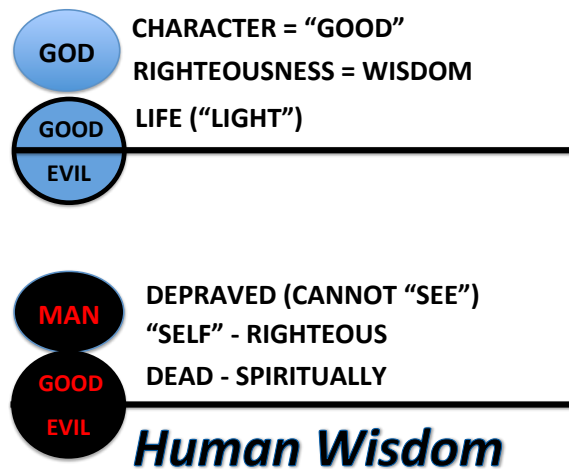
⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (3:6)



Notice that Eve "sees" now through the serpent's eyes, through his perception. Her eyes are delighted. And she desires to have this new wisdom that can determine good and evil for itself. She eats. But she does not get a "new" wisdom, nor one that is independent and free. She gets Satan's (the serpent's) wisdom. Now forever she will have a wisdom that will determine morality apart from God's character. Her new wisdom will focus on glorifying herself, not God. She will be locked into seeing through eyes that look only at the physical world and

determine what is best for herself. She will put herself before others and especially before God. She will remake God through her own eyes and He will become a god who conforms to her perception. She will remake morality and ethics as whatever benefits herself and she will call it “good.” She will say that her perception is God’s perception.

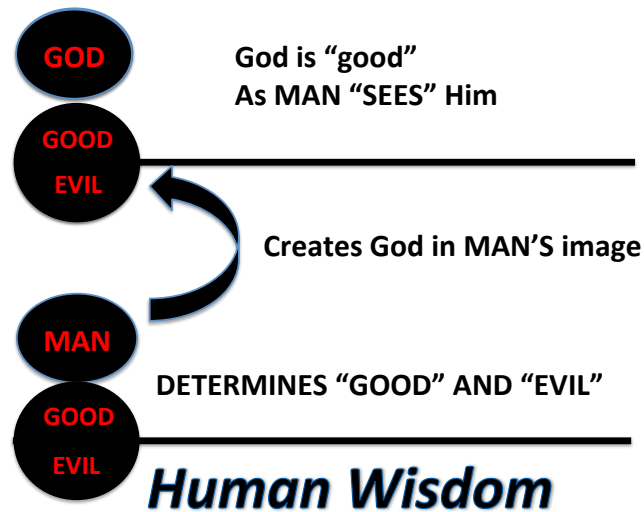
Man was originally to “see” (evaluate) with God’s eyes, not his own. But the moment Eve and Adam ate of the fruit, they received a different character than God and became their own determiner of good and evil. The text states that “then the eyes of both of them were opened” (Gen. 3:7), and now they would evaluate (i.e., opened eyes) quite differently than God.



Eve Makes God in Her Image

Since Eve now has her own character to determine everything, she will determine God now through her own eyes. She will make God out to fulfill her desires, not His. Thus God will become like her.

Later in the chapter God says, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:22). This indicates that they had become their own god. The definition of a “god” here is one who is the source of their own determination of good and evil. Thus there would be two sources of that determination, or two gods. God was the ultimate, the only correct source. And now man would be the depraved source (actually Satan as the source of the man’s depravity). Neither value system could ever agree with the other, nor perceive either’s value system as good, since it would never conform to their own (self).



Adam and Eve Act on their Character

⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Of course, the first thing to notice is that God is "walking" in the garden. Normally, when not used physically, the Hebrew word, *halak*, is used for one's character expression. Thus when two people "walk together," they are in agreement (e.g., character or value system agreement). So now God's character appears in the garden and Adam and Eve hide, thus indicating they know their characters are not in sync with God's. In addition, since God has threatened them with death should they adopt a different character, they are avoiding that judgment.

⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." (3:8-10)

The word for "sound" here is the same word as "voice." One should recall that God's Word was the expression of His character in Genesis 1 when it was with His voice that He created the entire universe. It was His "voice" that revealed His character into the physical realm. Thus, the appearance of God's Word, God's voice, is a contrast with man's character and he immediately is afraid of the impending judgment of God's character on him. Note here that God's Word or voice is the sole means of revealing God's character. That is why Jesus is the "Word" in John 1:1.

Yet what is very interesting is that man is explaining why he is hiding. He is trying to tell God that actually nothing has changed (an excuse for not being in the open with God). He is hiding because God is a fearful Judge and man recognizes he is now under that judgment. But what is clear is that Adam is deceived and is trying to deceive God. Prior to Adam's sin, God was not His judge. But Adam's eyes were now explaining everything by what he could see, as Eve did earlier. He could see that he was naked. Adam's new character had identified his nudity as exposing himself and his rebellious character before God. He thus sought to hide his evil character (unseen) by covering himself (seen), something that came from his newfound "wisdom." (Man's wisdom always excuses or "justifies" is errant behavior.) In other words, his newly acquired "depraved" character assessed himself as "good" and attempted to convince God that he was good in God's sight by attempting to cover his sin. This, of course, showed the nature of his depraved character as he tries to explain to God why he is not walking with Him. Of course, the very fact that he is hiding shows he is not the same, and the fact that he is now trying to explain that everything is "good" when it is not, shows the nature of his new character, depraved. (Note that self-justification is by itself an indicator that man is not justified since if man was at God's expectations he would need no "self-justification. Man's only justification is if God justifies him.)

Man and woman now have their own "wisdom," their own character that perceives "good and evil" for itself. It will assess things solely by their view of the physical world and determine what is good or evil for themselves. But they will not be free since they are locked into determining only what this depraved character sees. And not only are they enslaved to their evil character, it isn't even their own. It came from Satan himself.

THE BIBLICAL STORY: GOD'S CHARACTER REPRESENTED ON EARTH

To those who desire to understand the Biblical Story, this is the core issue. God's character was to be represented in man throughout the earth. But, in the failure of man they would receive the sentence of death since they could not represent God. But God would desire from His character that His created beings would not die. So He prophesied that He would send His Son (Genesis 3:15) to be a sacrifice for their evil character. But even more than this, the Son would have the perfect character of God. He would be the Man who would represent God, be in His image. And He would give that character of God to those who asked for forgiveness of their old character. Thus they would obtain a new character, new life, through this New Adam, called the Seed of the Woman (the ultimate progeny of Eve). It would not come to evil man through his perception since he could not perceive what was good from his own character. It would not come to man through good works, as man's perception of "good" was different than God's and his good works did not qualify. Thus God would have to "impute" God's character to man through the death

of His Son. And God would have to enlighten man's mind so he could see that his own depravity and his need for God's good character given in His Son.

The Old Testament: The Hope of the Seed of the Woman to impart God's Character

From Eve ("she saw that it was good . . . and she took") through Cain (who rejected the revelation of the Seed of the Woman) through the Wicked World ("they saw that the daughters of men were good and they took them"²) to the Judges ("every man did that which was right in his own eyes"), the Old Testament character continually determined right and wrong, good and evil, based on what they determined from their own character's viewpoint. Moses in Deuteronomy 12:8 warned the Israelites against leaving the revelation of God in the Law to go to their own perception.

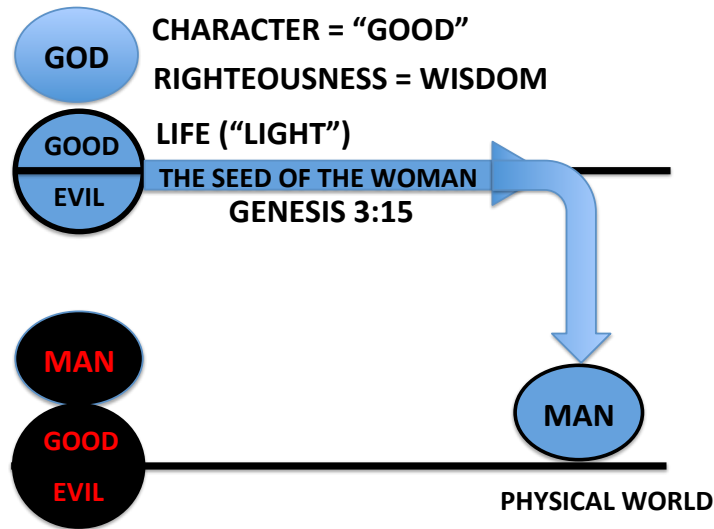
⁸ "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; (Deuteronomy 12:8)

David, just like Eve had observed the fruit as good, observed Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:2 when he "saw from the top of the roof a woman bathing and she was exceedingly good to the sight." David thus contradicted God's character desires for his own.

On the other hand, there are those who claimed the promise of the Christ to come ("the Seed of the Woman".) There was Adam (he named his wife, "Life" because she would bring forth this New Adam), Abel (who imitated God's demonstration of hope in the Seed of the Woman), Noah (he "walked" with God), David (in Psalm 16 David anticipates his ultimate child, the Christ).

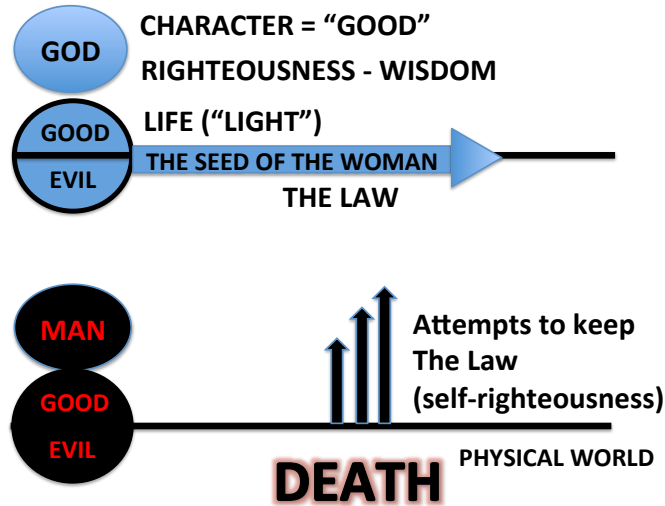
Thus the Old Testament prophesied that the "Seed of the Woman, the Christ, would come and bring the character of God to man. Man was to hope, and believe, in this Promised One.

² The words, "saw," "good," and "took" are the same as Eve's statement.



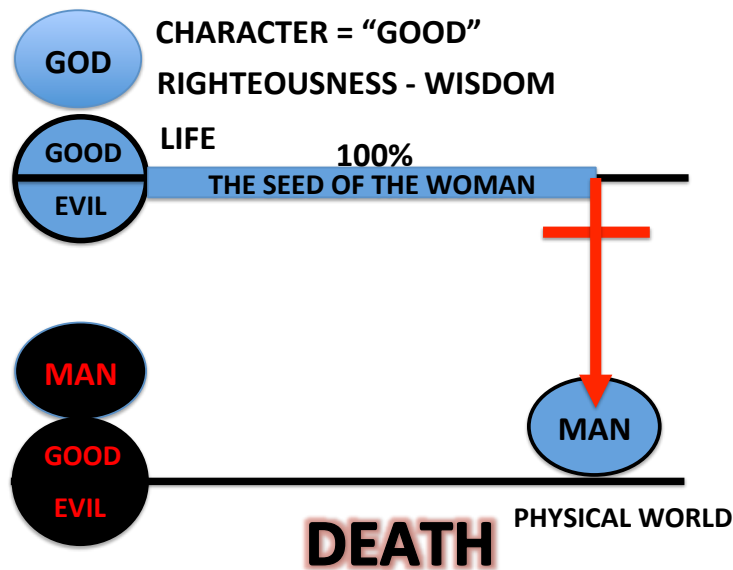
As the prophets came and went, they would bring the message of God's character to disobedient Israel. They would tell the people what God wanted them to do and call on them to "repent." But they would not since their evil character could not perceive ("see") that God's character, as revealed by the prophets, was "good." They loved determining good and evil for themselves. So they lusted after pagan women, worshipped their gods (gods are imaginations from one's own desires), and generally followed the ungodly peoples who determined everything for themselves, not God.

The Law, the revelation of God's character, showed how evil man was and how he would never be able to qualify as righteous, i.e., God's character. Man's attempts to keep it would never do it. Man was to keep the Law from his heart ("love the Lord thy God") and recognize his inability and come to God through the sacrifices that pointed to Christ, the Seed of the Woman.



The Gospels

Finally, the Seed of the Woman appeared on the scene. Jesus was the One who would die for mankind and then give His perfect, godly character, to those who ask for it and the forgiveness of their sins.



The Jews, however, loved their own determination of God and continued to worship a god made in their image by which they would be glorified (self-righteousness).

The Sermon on the Mount

As Jesus began to introduce Himself and His theology, He stood on a mountain on the north side of the Sea of Galilee and preached. He stated that He was the One that the Old Testament longed for. He was the One who would bring the character of God to man. However, man had this evil character that determined what was “good” for themselves and thus Jesus showed them that they were wrong and did not match up to the desires of God (the true determiner of good and evil).

The Sermon is about the righteousness of God seen in the Old Testament (God’s character revealed). Thus Jesus took the Law and showed them that their self-centered interpretation of it was evil even though they called it “good.” His repeated statements in Matthew 5, “you have heard it said, but I say unto you . . . “ were indications that the Pharisees would quote only a portion of the Law (“you have heard it said . . . “) and claim they fulfilled it so to gain some glory for themselves. But Jesus showed that the Law actually said (“but I say unto you”) that it was their heart, that old determiner of good and evil, that was evil. The Pharisees said, “You shall not murder,” but did not realize that actually the Law required obedience from the heart regarding their brother, “You shall not hate your neighbor from your heart (Leviticus 19:17).” The Pharisees said, “You shall not commit adultery,” but did not realize that the Law required that it be kept from the heart when it said, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife (Deuteronomy 5:21).” Thus both hate and coveting came from one’s evil character and demonstrated that their character was evil, unlike God’s. Thus the source from which they determined good and evil was bad. It perceived things as good, but from God’s perspective they were evil. The Law reflected that a perfect representation of God’s character was required.

² . . . 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. (Leviticus 19:2)

⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. (Deuteronomy 6:5-6)

In addition to that, lest man think that his “good deeds” were worth something in the eyes of God, Jesus made it clear that those who neglected the “least of these commandments” (5:19) would not achieve the character of God required for the kingdom. One had to be exactly the character of God to achieve life in the kingdom. To assess that anything less would do actually revealed one’s depraved character as they set up their own value system for the kingdom, not God’s.

In Matthew 5:29, Jesus makes a statement about removing your eye if it would be keeping you from the kingdom. His point is that the kingdom of God is the ultimate goal of man and there is nothing else of value, even one’s eye.

²⁹ "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. (Matthew 5:29)

Yet the "eye" in the Sermon on the Mount (as we have seen in the past Scriptures) is the perceiver or determiner of one's value system. It is the revealer of one's character, how they "see" things. In the example just before this statement in 5:27-28, Jesus pointed out that to "look" on a woman to "covet" her was adultery in one's heart or character. Thus this "looking" of the "eye" revealed one's character.

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; ²⁸ but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for (lit.: "to covet") her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

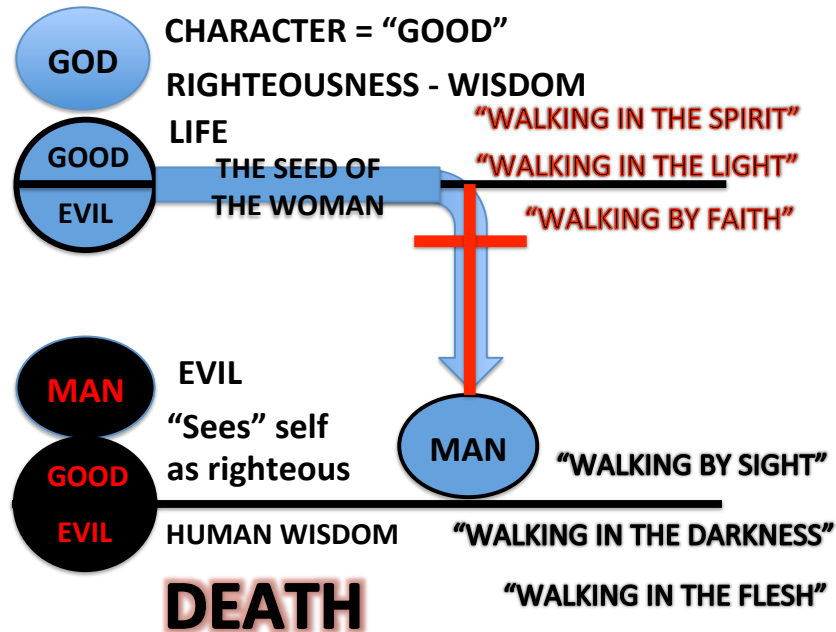
Thus one should not pluck out their "eye" since that would do no good. The "eye" was simply the revealer of one's character, one's heart. Thus, Jesus is saying their heart was the source of the problem and needed to be plucked out. They needed a new character. The old one could never do.

The Epistles and the Church Age

As the story moves into the church age, this new character has been imputed into the believer and he is to walk on that basis, that is that he possesses that character and through that character he is to act on behalf of Christ.

The terms that are used for these two extremes are "walking in the Spirit" (revelation of imputed righteousness) versus "walking in the flesh" (self-glorification (success) through operating on human reasoning and sight) or "walking by faith" versus "walking by sight" which reflects similar concepts. John uses the terms "walking in the light" versus "walking in the darkness" and both John and James use the opposites of "life" and "death". Each of these is a contrast between one who seeks the source of "good" through the revelation of God in His Son Jesus Christ and the other that seeks its own glory through human, self-glorifying reasoning. In short, life is from the very specific self-revelation of God in the Scriptures. Death is everything else.

The believer thus is to walk on the basis of the revelation of Christ and how God has given to man "eternal life" (the character of God) through the revelation of the Spirit ("walking in the Spirit" or "walking by faith"). He is not to operate on what he sees (sight) according to his own desires (flesh) based on human reasoning, which is death.



Application to Today's Believer

The believer has access to two natures.

The one is dead, that is, everything that comes from it is death, opposed to God, and without any benefit. This is the one that pleases self, glorifies self, takes advantage of others for its own glory. It is the one that pursues selfish ambition, success as one's identity, rejecting sacrifice for the cause of Christ and the brother. For the believer, this character was paid for at the cross. Thus one's self-identity, one's ego, one's glory was judged dead and has no benefit with God. It determines what is good and evil based on one's own benefit, one's own values. It will seek glory in the church because of riches, honor, good looks, or any other thing to be elevated and called spiritual. It will avoid the outcast, those who cannot benefit oneself.

The other is the character of God imputed to man. It determines what is good and evil according to the God that is in the Scriptures. It seeks to give up its life for the cause of Christ, seeks to give out the mercy that Christ has given, and does not value its life even to death for the cause of Christ.

Every believer has a choice. Walk according to the Spirit, or the flesh. Walk by faith in the revelation of Jesus Christ and imputed righteousness, or by sight. Walk in the light or the darkness. One is life and the other is death. While it is a lifetime decision to pursue one or the other positionally, it is a minute-by-minute decision sanctificationally.

The Knowledge of Good and Evil

Chapter 2

Wisdom Literature³ & The Psalms

Wisdom or Folly

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Based on the previous chapter, the definition of “wisdom” is plain and direct. It is, nothing else but, the character of God. That character represents His desires. He alone determines “good and evil” from those desires.

Wisdom Literature

Wisdom literature is really quite simple. It contrasts God’s “wisdom” versus man’s “folly.” Folly, or the desires of the “fool,” is very simply what was seen in the last chapter as “human wisdom.” It is self-centered, self-justifying, egocentric and totally from one’s physical perception of what benefits them at the cost of others.

Note well that human wisdom is not just adultery, cheating, stealing and such. It is “good deeds” as well. In other words human wisdom comes up with niceties; helping the widow, orphan and the poor. Our government points out regularly the desire to help the poor, but it is hardly done with righteous motives (i.e., to glorify Christ). Liberal churches spend time on the social gospel, but are not motivated by their reception of the mercy of Christ. Thus human wisdom is to be assessed, not by its deeds (although they are often evident), but by its motivation. In other words does the deed glorify the salvation through Christ, or is it done to do display some “good” in man.

God’s wisdom is sourced only from revelation. There is no other place from which man might obtain it. He cannot obtain it from viewing the physical realm, nor can he obtain it from any innate logical system. There is no overlap with human observation of “good” and God’s revelation of “good.” Apart from Christ man can do no good deeds.

³ While most of the notes herein are from my own study, some of the thoughts and concepts come from Dr. Elliott Johnson in his course in Wisdom Literature at Dallas Theological Seminary.

The Source of Wisdom: God's Revelation

First of all, man must admit that God's revelation is the only source of truth. There is no other source where one can determine values of any sort with respect to God. If man determines that he can learn something of God's values from physical observation through his human evaluation, he will get nothing. He will end up with his own perception and that perception is always death, or a separation from God.

James states regarding this wisdom which is obtainable only from revelation,

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

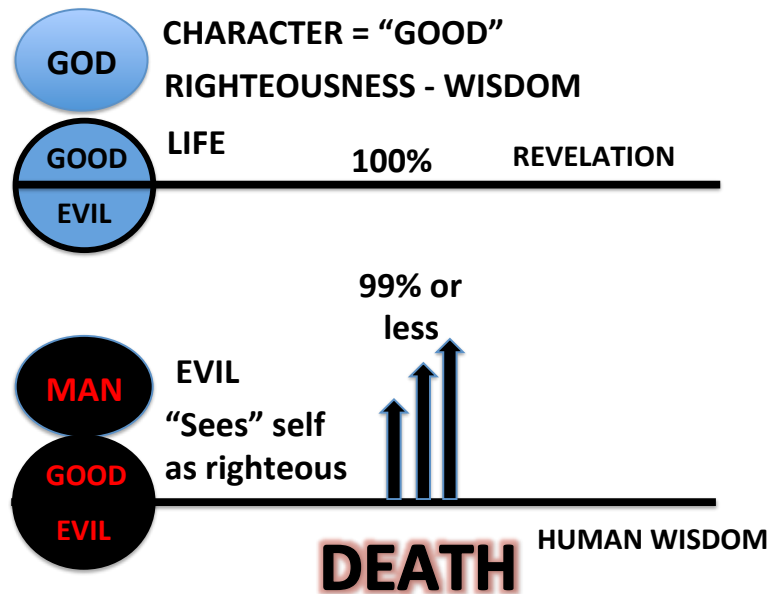
¹⁷ Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. (James 1:17)

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. (James 3:17)

The Book of Proverbs is absolutely clear when it states as bookends to chapters 1—9 the same concept that "fear" (or great awe) of *YHWH* (His revelation) is the only entry point for this knowledge.

⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)



"The Beginning of Wisdom:" God as the Source of Wisdom

In order to start, to approach, this process of obtaining wisdom, knowledge . . . life, one must recognize that God is the only source. Thus the observer will "value" God's character above everything else. He will have no value on anything else. Thus, the Scriptures are the only source of truth since they are the means by which God chose to reveal Himself.

Thus, by reverencing God as the only source and value man will begin the journey to obtaining that wisdom from God. This is the parallel to the point of salvation where man begins to reverence God in Jesus Christ. Here he must ask God for Jesus (wisdom incarnate) and he will be given Jesus.

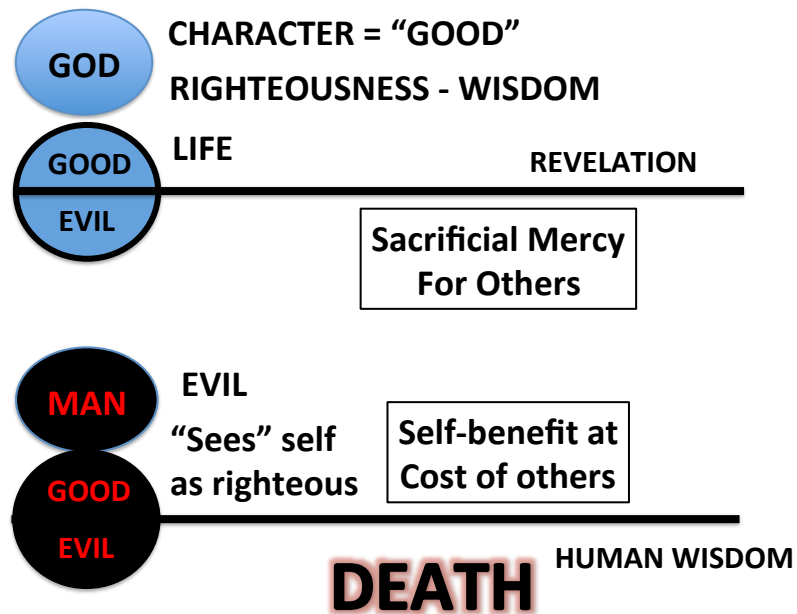
Thus, having become saved, the man now should pursue the knowledge given through Jesus as if his life depended on it, because it does. Should he at any time feel that knowledge of God or any thing of value comes from anywhere other than God (human wisdom and any other sensuous and self-perceived sources), then he will lose what he had obtained from God. In other words, God is like pure gold. Once this gold becomes mixed with impurities, then you don't have truth any longer. One has something, but it is not truth. Truth is 100% correct and if it has any fallible information with it, it is not truth. Thus, man must always get everything from the Scriptures as that is the only source of 100% truth. A "double-minded" man is one who obtains some things from the Scriptures but mixes them with human wisdom (the wisdom found on TV talk shows – all of them). The result is 100% death since they don't mix.

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

(James 1:5-8)

James is very clear as to what the believer does when he errs. He does what he perceives to be a “good thing” and calls it godly. Things like honor, riches, selfish ambition are all called godly by believers, yet are ungodly. James warns about this mixing.

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (James 1:13-16)



God's Character as the "Woman Wisdom" in Proverbs

The righteousness of God's character is represented in Proverbs 1—9 as a woman. As such she is presented as desirable, as one's helper. She is presented as

the one who will come along side of the son and give him what he needs to get him through life . . . wisdom of God. He is to embrace her, to seek her.

Human Wisdom (“sight”) as the Source of folly

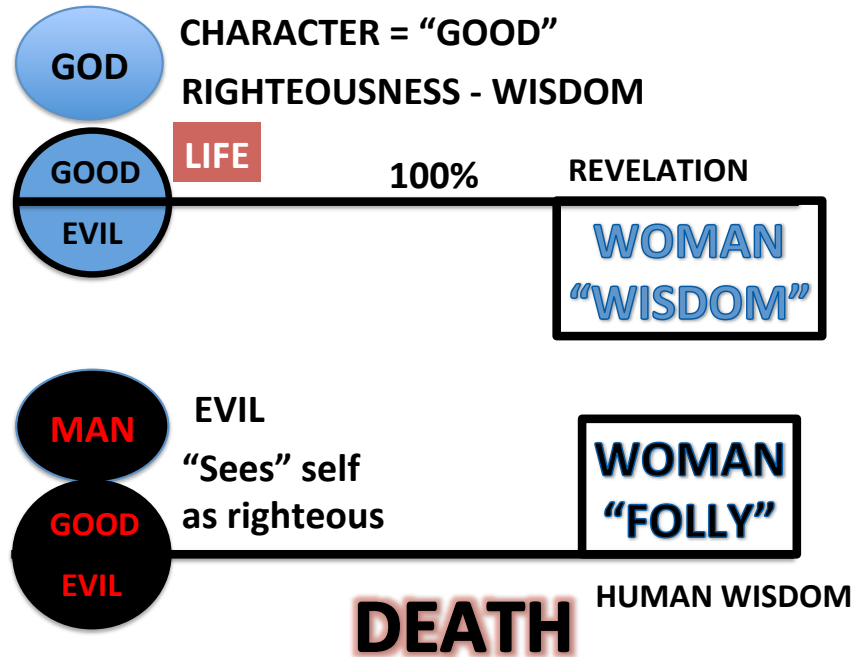
Again, it is important to note the source of one’s wisdom. Since one does not have the ability to be free, they must obtain their wisdom from somewhere. If one does not obtain it from God, then one obtains it from their innate character, that of lust, which ultimately comes from Satan.

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. (Jam 3:14-15 NAU)

Human wisdom as the “Woman of Folly” in Proverbs

The word “folly” or the character of folly, the “fool,” is one who rejects the revelation for his own eyesight, his own value system. As such it benefits himself at the cost of others. The picture is that of the woman, “Folly” who is the source of this false “wisdom.”

¹³ The woman of folly is boisterous, *She is* naive and knows nothing. ¹⁴ She sits at the doorway of her house, On a seat by the high places of the city, ¹⁵ Calling to those who pass by, Who are making their paths straight: ¹⁶ "Whoever is naive, let him turn in here," And to him who lacks understanding she says, ¹⁷ "Stolen water is sweet; And bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant." ¹⁸ But he does not know that the dead are there, *That* her guests are in the depths of Sheol. (Proverbs 9:13-18)

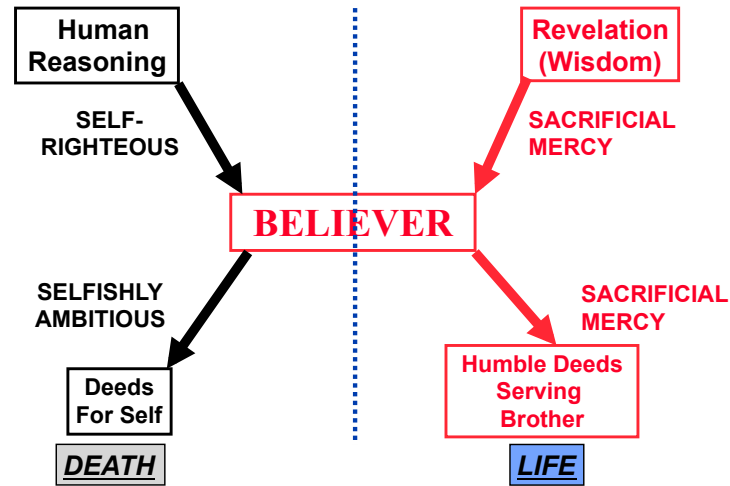


The Woman Wisdom versus the Woman Folly

These two women will try to appeal to the naïve young man, the son, in Proverbs. They are not compatible, but are disparate. One leads to life and the other leads to death. Very simply they are philosophies of life or death that this young man will adopt.

The Lesson to the Reader ("the son"): Seek the Woman Wisdom

This young man needs to grasp at the source of wisdom, God, represented by the Woman Wisdom. If he negates her, he will go to his default, his innate desires, human wisdom, lust and greed. However, he will not call them evil. He will see them as good.

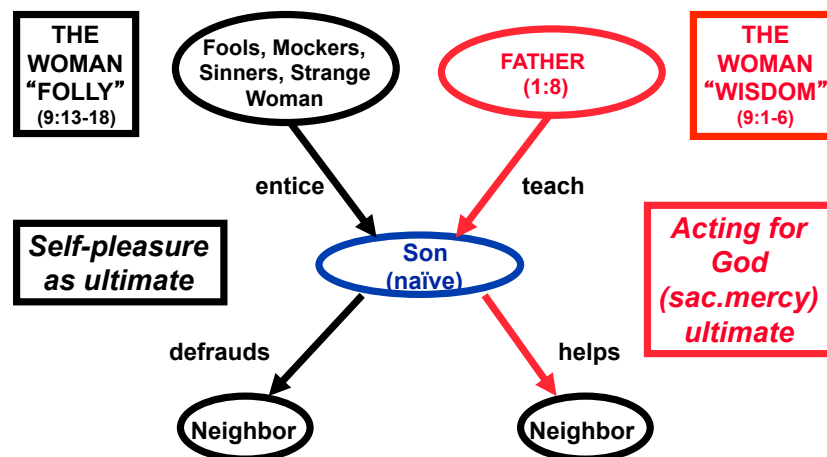


The Beginning of Wisdom is the Fear of YHWH

Dr. C. Baylis 01.14

The Teachers of Wisdom or Folly: The Father versus the Fool

All of mankind will follow one or the other of these sources. The father, who has followed the woman, Wisdom, is teaching his son in Proverbs 1—9. The ones who follow folly or human wisdom are the fool (rejects revelation) and the mocker (mocks those who follow revelation). Both the fool and the mocker are directly tied to their philosophy and set great store by the fact that they think they know what is “good.” Thus, they advocate evil as good and the mocker will delight in mocking the one who follows revelation.



By looking at the above diagram, one can see that the natural innate way of the world is that these fools, mockers, or sinners (or even the adulteress woman) will entice the young impressionable lad on the basis of human wisdom (folly), i.e., what they can get for self-benefit. Their human wisdom philosophy is that pleasure is the ultimate goal and thus pursue it, disregarding its effect on those from whom they take it.

On the other hand, the father exhorts the lad to follow the philosophy of God (not observable in the physical realm), which is wisdom. This always is acting for God self-sacrificially for others for their benefit.

The illustrations throughout the book are many. The sinners entice the young man to join the group and steal from another stating that they will only gain from the theft of another. The adulteress woman entices the young man to enter her house and enjoy her charms since her husband is gone and they will have nothing but enjoyment with no penalties.

Yet the father urges the young man to follow God and be merciful. He urges him to stay with the wife of his youth and to allow her to satisfy his physical needs as a provision from God.

The benefits of following the woman folly are always pleasure for oneself at the cost of others. The benefits of following the woman wisdom are (presently unseen) benefits for oneself as one serves God.

The Philosophy and Rewards of Folly

The rewards of following human wisdom are clear and visible. They are riches, honor, pleasure that is immediately obtainable, or at least obtainable in this life. The philosophy is self-justifying. In other words the philosophy is not pure, but is made-up in order to justify one's selfish lusts. The young man wants pleasure so he goes and gets it, justifying it (philosophy) as he needs to.

The Philosophy and Rewards of Wisdom

The rewards of following the Woman Wisdom are not visible. The reward is not a measurable success point. The reward is the actual privilege of acting for God. In other words, the reward of walking with God is "walking with God."

The closest example I can give for this in the human realm (though inadequate) is something like the phrase, "the fun is in the journey." We have all gone on vacation when we were young and found the excitement of

travelling to the destination was great fun. This is what it is with God. He gives you the ability to act for Him. This is the reward, being able to be merciful because God has granted it to us to be so. But being merciful to those in need does not gain a visible present benefit.

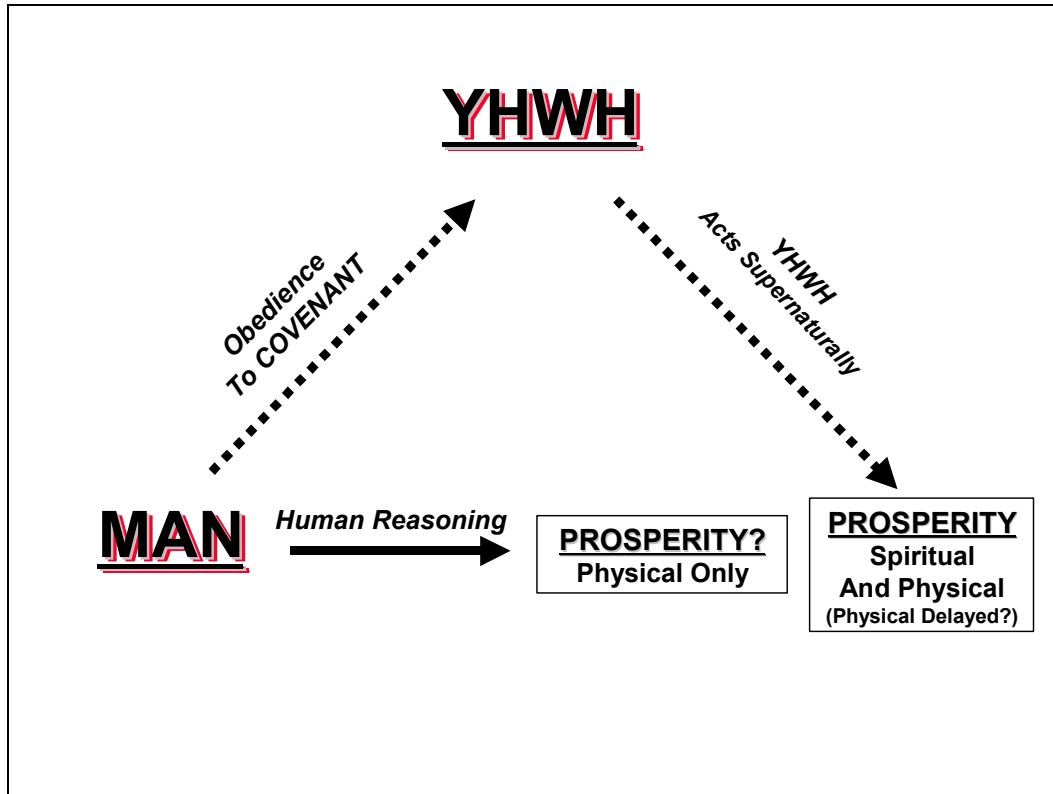
Another, although inadequate, illustration is my dad and me. I had the greatest dad in the world. He was kind, patient, loving and good. He and I would walk down the road together hand in hand. He was old and I was a kid. We would walk down that road together in winter, spring, summer and fall. Now my dad gave me things. He helped me buy my first house. He helped me through seminary. He used to buy my dinner for me when I couldn't (and frequently when I could). My father is now with the Lord. But if you asked me what I would like to have from my father. It wouldn't be the financial help. I would like to, just one more time, walk hand in hand with him down that road. You see the benefits of knowing my dad . . . are knowing my dad.

Today quite frequently the church models itself after the woman, folly. She looks for measurable success. Either they count conversions, baptisms, the size of their building, their popularity, or their acceptance by others, etc. But there is no measure of visible success when one is walking with God. The Bible only prescribes suffering and lack of visible success. Thus one must see the value of wisdom and the ability to walk with her as the reward itself.

Contrariwise, when one seeks reward in the physical realm for their deeds for God, then they are actually following the woman, folly. They are taking the glory that belongs only to God. Thus one must see themselves as servants who are in the position of bringing glory to God through sacrificing for Him.

Thus, in the secular realm, man acts to achieve a measurable physical outcome through physical means. He tries to make money so as to elevate himself in the world and uses means that takes from others.

In the spiritual realm, the believer acts on behalf of God according to God's character desires (sacrificial mercy) and God controls the outcome. But it is the action that is desirable, not the physical outcome. The desire is to walk with God, to represent Him.



Characters in Wisdom Literature

The Wicked⁴: are rejecters of the knowledge of YHWH and its content and deeds that follow (also “ungodly”, Psa. 36:1).⁵ They either do not know the revelation of YHWH, or are aware of it and reject it. (Also “sinners” in some passages are somewhat synonymous. Sinners are those who specifically violate the law of God in their activities. (Psalm 104:35 “Let sinners be consumed from the earth, And let the wicked be no more.”))

10:4 The wicked (רָשָׁע), in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek *Him*. All his thoughts are, "There is no God."

⁴ Proverbs teaches (almost in a classroom sense) about the wicked, where they came from, and who they are. Psalms has moved out of the classroom and now is in the battle.

⁵ Note here that the words for “evil” and “wickedness” are utilized as virtual synonyms in Psalms (i.e., Psalm 5:4).

Mockers: They have a closed mind, actively mock those who follow the revelation of YHWH (“mock” only in Psalm 73:8, also ‘scoffers,’ lit.: “those who scorn”, מַצְחִיִּים Psa. 1:1, “arrogant” NASV, 119:51).

119:51: The arrogant utterly **deride** (lit.: “scorn”) me, *Yet* I do not turn aside from Thy law.

Fools: Negative mind: Reject the revelation of YHWH for human wisdom. They emphasize pursuing the temporal pleasure that seems justified.

The fool in Proverbs has now become active and has now become ‘the wicked’, ‘sinners’, ‘scoffers’, ‘enemies’.

1. Identified by his choices – rebellious against wisdom (107:17)
2. Identified by the rejection of the word (119:155)
3. Sinners: Psalm 51:13, those who oppose the revelation of God in deeds.
4. Scoffers: Psalm 119:51, arrogant in their human wisdom oppose YHWH and those who follow His revelation.
5. Enemies:⁶ Psalm 37 details the parallel between the Lord’s enemies and the representatives. It is due to his identification with YHWH and his revelation that the representative is being attacked.⁷

107:17: Fools, because of their rebellious way, And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.

49:10: For he sees *that even* wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish, And leave their wealth to others.

49:11: Their inner thought is, *that* their houses are forever, *And* their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names.

49:12: But man in *his* pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish.

49:13: **This is the way of those who are foolish**, And of those after them who approve their words. Selah.

⁶ Psalm 17:9 parallels enemies with the wicked.

⁷ It is very important here to note that lament Psalms are not simple complaint, but are complaint based on the representative’s identification with YHWH and his subsequent persecution. Thus he complains (respectfully) based on his hope in the promises and his yearning for the promise to come forth and his situation to be rectified in the glory of YHWH.

The Simple (Naïve): (19:8, 119:30): Empty-headed, not knowing which way to go, without revelation in the world. If left to his own devices will follow the wicked through human observation and wisdom. If revelation is given and perceived then he may act and move to the position of wise man who makes wise choices.

19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the **simple**.

119:130: The unfolding of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the **simple**.

Wise: This is what the naïve becomes when he follows the direction of YHWH's word. Typically this is the author of the Psalm who fears YHWH openly and respects His revelation. Open, discerning, but always based on the perception of the revelation of YHWH as truth. Assesses each opportunity through the eyes of the text. **It cannot be overemphasized that wisdom only can come through a knowledge of YHWH in the Scriptures (and His Son Jesus Christ). There is no other way to approach this God based on human observation.**

1. Foundation is the revelation of YHWH (Ps. 112:1)⁸
2. Wise man formerly *naïve*⁹ (Ps. 19:7), but listened to the revelation and now gives praise.¹⁰ One is encouraged to be wise by understanding YHWH (107:43)

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

⁸ Notice the Hebrew parallelism here identifies the "fear of the Lord" as 'delighting in His commandments' or the enjoyment of the revelation of this God, YHWH. Notice the attitude toward the Law is one of heartfelt glee over knowing YHWH personally through His revelation.

⁹ The *naïve* one here is similar to the naïve in Proverbs (19:8, 116:6, 119:30). He is empty-headed, and when not instructed in the revelation will be led astray by the human wisdom of his peers.

¹⁰ Note the story in Psalm 119. The author had at one time gone astray, listening to his own wisdom, but is now back to praise God regarding the wisdom of the Scriptures in his life.

19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, **making wise the simple**.
107:43: **Who is wise?** Let him give heed to these things; And consider the lovingkindnesses of the LORD.

The Righteous: (צַדִּיקִים) These have received the righteousness of God and identify with Him and His revelation. They are contrasted with the unrighteous or the wicked. Normally they are referred to in terms of their identification with YHWH (Who is righteous) and thus they are seen as giving glory (vertical) or standing against those who do not identify with God. Thus the term “righteous” is very particularly an identification term as one who stands as YHWH’s representative.

64:10 The **righteous** man will be glad in the LORD, and will take refuge in Him; And all the upright in heart will glory.

The Godly: The word here is חֲסִידִים (pronounced ‘chesed-eem’). Note here that the root is חֶסֶד (‘chesed’), which is the word for “lovingkindness” (NASV) or better “mercy” or “grace”. Since *hesed* is the character of God’s love (merciful one-way) the *hesedim* are the merciful ones, or those who reflect the character of God through the representation of his mercy (both receivers of and givers of). Thus these are believers who trust in God’s righteousness to be delivered graciously to them.

4:3 But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him.

The Wisdom Books

Proverbs: In Proverbs the writers offer choices for the naïve (empty-headed) to choose. He will choose either to follow the revelation of YHWH (the fear of YHWH identified as the “Woman Wisdom”) and become wise, or to follow human wisdom (reject the revelation identified in the Woman Folly) and become a fool. Thus the Book continues with instructions to the naïve to become wise based on the revelation of YHWH. The nature of the book is instructive.

Ecclesiastes: In a sermon based on Adam’s life (post fall) the Preacher points out the seeming contradiction of life lived based on revelation versus that of the human eye (human wisdom). The wicked prosper. The righteous die young. Yet there is no satisfaction found in the temporal

things of this life, only in a trust in YHWH.¹¹ The book is generally observation, conclusion and exhortation in that light.

Job: A personal story of a man who reacts to God as One who must perform according to Job's expectations (Job limits God to One who has small understandable purposes). Very simply he, though a righteous man, is suffering. God never gives Job an answer to his question ("Why am I unjustly suffering?") but simply gives Job a small glimpse of His unfathomable greatness and sovereignty thus indicating to Job that His purposes are far beyond Job's understanding should they be explained. The message is that man must operate on limited knowledge, but always in faith on YHWH's revealed instruction, for man can surely trust in YHWH to bring about all things far beyond what man perceives as required.

Song of Solomon: As in the case of Job, the Song does not embrace wisdom broadly, but interacts with Genesis 2 and the relationship of a man and woman. Fully valuable, not only in the human sense, but that the human marriage is representative of God and His bride. However, as the author reviews the beauties of Genesis 2 and the relationship of a man and his wife, he points out very emphatically that while the physical should be preserved and enjoyed within the covenant of marriage, so also even more emphatically the emotional relationship should be preserved for its unique enjoyment in the covenant with another.

Psalms: In the Psalms there are two basic themes. In contrast to Proverbs, the choices have already been made,¹² and the author is following YHWH (He perceives the value of the revelation). Yet like Ecclesiastes, the wise man (author) examines the evidence (wicked prospering, usually at his expense) and relates the confidence of deliverance in YHWH and His promise (lament). The other theme is that of praise, the rejoicing of the author (wise man)¹³ as he notes the exhibition of YHWH's attributes in His character (merciful, omnipresent, etc.),

¹¹ The Psalms express the same message, again however not in the sense that the reader is being taught these lessons, but that the author is identifying with this knowledge. Psalm 49 expresses a very similar message to Ecclesiastes.

¹² While there is emphasis on the establishment of the revelation of YHWH it is mostly assumed as a present possession of the author. When it occurs it is typically in a teaching situation. In other words the author is content with his status, and sees part of his life the declaration of the foundation "fear the Lord" (Ps. 34:11, 110:10).

¹³ The contrast to Proverbs is that Proverbs instructs one to be wise, while the Psalms rejoices in that wisdom.

revelation (covenant, promises), works (i.e., creation, victory over enemies)

Praise: The notation of YHWH's demonstrations of His attributes in the author's perception. While private praise is not to be negated in the Psalms, it should be noted that the public confession of YHWH before others is an integral part of the recognition of YHWH. The praise is based on recognition of YHWH's hand in his world but only by recognizing YHWH's revelation. The fool, who rejects revelation, sees the same thing as coincidence or bad/good luck.

The author is overwhelmed by YHWH's revelation as he perceives it in his world, YHWH's creation, promises, attributes. Thus he praises YHWH for what is perceived through the glasses of promise.

Descriptive Praise: The notation of YHWH's character, attributes with a focus on YHWH alone.

e.g., 'His mercy endures forever'

Declarative Praise: The notation of YHWH's works, the effective outworking of His character or promises.

e.g., 'He has saved me from the pit'

Lament: The notation of YHWH's promise in the absence of human perception (i.e., visible success).

The author now does not perceive visibly the fulfillment of the revelation of YHWH (character, promises, works) acted out in his world. He thus makes request for YHWH to bring about His promised deliverance visibly, to reveal Himself in the author's world, usually in personal deliverance, but most certainly due to the fact that the author is identified with YHWH, and that deliverance will be testimony to YHWH's greatness and the faithfulness to deliver those who represent Him.

The Delay

Note very carefully that “faith” requires a delay before one “sees” the promise fulfilled. In other words the promise of God begins the process. Man then believes in the promise and then endures without any visible evidence that the promise will come true. This period of delay is, by definition, suffering, since one is acting without any visible assurance. Thus the mocker and the scoffer attack the believer as ridiculous because he seemingly is acting without immediate visible and measurable benefit. Ultimately, however, the believer will receive his reward and will “see” it visibly.

Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb 11:1 NAU)

² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. (1Jo 3:2 NAU)

²⁴ For in hope (*a synonym here for “faith”*) we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (Rom 8:24-25 NAU)

In Deuteronomy, God laid out this principle so that Israel would understand that their faith was in the character of God to provide as He would. Thus He let them go without for a time (delay) so that He could see if they would ultimately trust His word of promise. This is the definition of “discipline,” where God lets one go without a visible reward so that they will learn to trust His promise.

² "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ "Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. (Deu 8:2-5 NAU)

Delay in the Psalms: “How long?”

There is a whole section of Psalms called the “Psalms of Lament.” These are characterized by the Psalmist “lamenting” because he is trusting in the promise and

is in a period of “delay” and is thus suffering without the fulfillment (deliverance). Thus he “laments” for his situation and longs for God to come and deliver Him so that his trust will have visible results, that of vindication with God. The Psalms are characterized by the statement, “How long . . . ?” or something similar.

² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I *am* pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed. ³ And my soul is greatly dismayed; But You, O LORD-- how long? ⁴ Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness. (Psalm 6:2-4)

¹⁰ How long, O God, will the adversary revile, *And* the enemy spurn Your name forever? ¹¹ Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? From within Your bosom, destroy *them!* (Psalm 74:10-11)

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. ² O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; And by night, but I have no rest. (Psalm 22:1-2) . . . ¹⁹ But You, O LORD, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance (Psalm 22:19) . . . ²⁴ For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from him; But when he cried to Him for help, He heard. (Psalm 22:24).

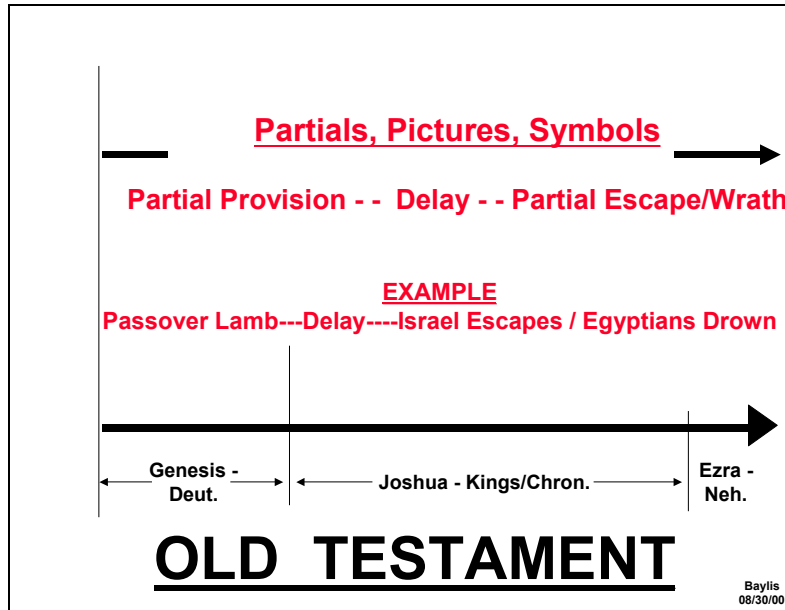
The Righteous Sufferer and the Enemy: The Imprecatory Psalms

One of the most interesting things to the casual reader are the statements that show up in the Psalms such as the following.

137:9 How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock.

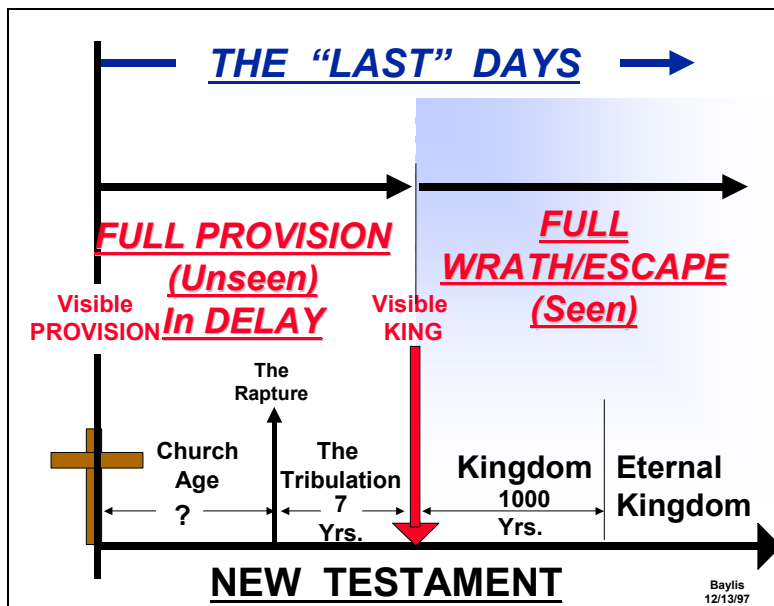
Because of the difficult nature of these verses many commentators have chosen to identify the author as being overly zealous and having a sinful attitude. Of course, this pushes against the inerrancy and inspiration of the author. If one does not believe what the author affirms, then they become the judge of the text and not the receiver of the message.

Old Testament: Partial Provision, short delay, then Partial Escape\Partial Wrath



In the Old Testament both promise and the fulfillment of the judgment and the reward could be seen. If the Old Testament man endured and was faithful it was usually possible that he could see the Kingdom in his (or his children's) lifetime (particularly during the period of the kings). Thus, a call for the deliverance was something that could be rather soon. Yet on the other hand, it could seem to escape him.

New Testament: Full Provision, Delay, Wrath / Escape at Second Coming



In the New Testament things are now full and real. However, the believer in the Church age lives between the full provision (the death and resurrection of Christ) and is awaiting the visible judgment/escape at the Second Coming. He is in the delay period. The promise has been fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection. Yet deliverance (in the kingdom sense) will not be in this life. Man must pass through death and resurrection to be part of the fullness of the ultimate kingdom. Thus, the prayer for deliverance in the fullest sense is different now than in the Psalms. The parallel prayer would be the prayer still of "Thy Kingdom come" (cf. also Luke 18:1ff.), yet it is beyond the reach of this life. It requires the return of Christ (cf. 2 Thess. 1).

However, it should be noted that the prayers of the Psalms were also for temporal vindication, for YHWH to be with him in smaller (than the kingdom) ways. This prayer is still the same. While it might not come, it may. A Christian must stand forth, perhaps even to death, with no guarantee of vindication or recognition in this life. On the other hand, the examples of temporal, and at times speedy, deliverance in response to prayers can be testified by all. However, the prayer of the saint, even in this age is for a speedy judgment on the enemies of God and a quick escape. The New Testament never pictures the believer in a state of contentment with the status quo of this age, but always in an eager anticipation of the wrath/escape in the appearance of Jesus Christ. To not be anticipating eagerly that day is to not be in conformity with the New Testament authors, indeed, with the heart of God.

Judgment by the Anointed One

In the beginning God had promised (Gen. 3:15) that judgment would fall on the seed (imitators) of the Serpent (unbelievers in the revelation). However, this judgment was only allotted to the Obedient One to come (the Seed of the Woman).

Unjust judgment, however, has been taken by the seeds of the Serpent toward the righteous. They have seen them as unfair, exclusionary, and contrary to the interests of themselves and the world. Thus Cain slew Abel, Lamech (Cain's relative) takes the vengeance of God into his own hands and slays those who offend him. Murder is thus the unjust judgment that has been reserved for God alone. Capital punishment, on the other hand, is the judgment which God has allotted to the governing authorities of nations to hand out to those who take the lives of others unjustly.

With regard to Himself and His people Israel, God has given authority to execute judgment to His Anointed One to administer on behalf, and through, the nation. Thus Israel is justified theologically under Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Saul, David and the Kings, to execute judgment, both internally (within the Nation Israel) and externally (against the enemies of the Nation Israel and thus God). However,

without the Anointed acting on behalf of God, the Nation cannot operate in a judgment mode. Note that frequently the anointed one would be operating in his own interests and would judge people unjustly. However, it was his position to judge, and to insure that his judgment was on the basis of God's revelation.

This is one of the main thrusts of the Old Testament narrative, the weakness of the anointed one. The judges, as well as Eli, Saul and David, had difficulty with judging on God's basis. Eli could not judge his sons (execution). At times Saul was weak in judging those whom God had called on him to execute. David could not judge Amnon (death for rape), could not judge Absalom, since he was frustrated by love for his children. Solomon alone was able to judge the enemies, but found himself incapable of judging himself (death for worship of other gods).

Thus during the Old Testament era the nation would judge, but only under the authorization of the anointed one, normally the King. During this age, the New Covenant age, judgment is still as needed as in the Old Testament. However, the Anointed One, who has appeared (1st Coming), now is delaying His judgment (the 2nd Coming), and sits at the Right Hand of the Father (Psalm 110) awaiting the time of judgment when the world will be subjected to Himself. Judgment then will not be less, but more, as the enemies are violently and unmercifully executed (cf. Zech. 14, Psalm 2, Rev. 19), and the judgment seat eliminates all unbelievers into Hades (Matt. 25), but all under the authorization of the Anointed One, Jesus the Messiah.

Following that in the 1000 year kingdom, judgment will be no less, since the King will rule with a clear and speedy vengeance on all those who oppose Him.

Thus, the believers of the church age cannot execute judgment, but are (as God is) patiently waiting for their own escape and the judgment of the opposition. During that time, they also share the love of God for their enemies, hoping, praying, evangelizing, so that those who are enemies might come under the mercy of God (as they themselves have come).

The Ultimate Righteous Sufferer and the Ultimate Enemy of God

In order to understand the Psalmist seeming anger in this case one has to return to the seminal verse, Genesis 3:15. Here, following the fall of the old Adam, God had prophesied One (the Seed of the Woman) to come who would represent Him (ultimate good) fully. Yet there would also be the seed of the serpent who would oppose God's revelation in this New Adam and would seek to kill and persecute Him.

Thus the plan of the ages began. Cain was the "seed of the serpent" and slew the righteous Abel who believed in the coming Seed of the Woman. These righteous believers will identify with the coming Seed of the Woman and will be persecuted and killed by the seed(s) of the serpent.

In the Psalms, these seeds of the serpent are the mockers, the fools, the sinners, and practically, the adulteress woman. The righteous are those who believe in the "Seed of the Woman" and identify with Him and His righteousness. It is He who will give them their righteousness and life.

Ultimately this Seed of the Woman will eliminate all the seeds of the serpent in a judgment that places them in the Lake of Fire apart from the Kingdom of God and of His Christ.

This is the battle that proceeds into the Psalms. The righteous one, who identifies with this ultimate One, is walking by faith in that One. Yet he is being persecuted for his belief, and thus calls on God for relief in the coming in judgment of His Son.

But note this. No one can pray these imprecatory Psalms on their own in their own righteousness. Only the ultimate Righteous One can pray these fully since He is the only One who deserves to be vindicated because of His righteousness. However, believers can identify with Him in this prayer as they are suffering on His behalf.

Thus the New Testament relates this suffering and vindication to the believer in His relationship with the ultimate Righteous One, Jesus Christ.

⁴ therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. ⁵ *This is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. ⁶ For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-10)

⁷ now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? ⁸ "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8)

The Nature of God's Wrath on the Enemy

“Joshua fit the battle of Jericho and the walls came tumbling down . . . “ goes the song sung by every child raised in Sunday School during the 50’s. Yet nowhere in the song does it talk about the wrath of God on the people of Jericho.

The Elimination of Everything that Breathes

Yet on the specific instruction of God, “²¹ They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword” (Joshua 6:21).

Now I have been around for a long time and have seen devastation throughout the world. But I have never seen any palatable way of watching baby dying in any way, let alone by the sword. It is always horrific. Yet this was God’s judgment, not only on Jericho, but also on every city found within the boundaries of Canaan. Anything that had breath was to die, of man, of animals, both young and old.

¹⁶ “Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. ¹⁷ “But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you, (Deuteronomy 20:16-17)

The Humiliation of the Wicked in Death

As if execution was not enough, their death is a humiliating death. In other words, when the enemy loses, he not only is simply eliminated, God mocks him in his death.

Quite frequently, interpreters assume that one goes to hell (or the Lake of Fire) to pay for his sins. In other words, his time in hell is time spent to pay God back for a life of sinfulness.

This is not the case. Man can never make up for his sins, not even one of them. This errant theology is based on the delinquent “balances” theory of righteousness. The correct theology is that Christ was the substitute for all sins and He alone paid for them. Man goes to hell because He rejects God, rejects His Son. Thus God takes out His wrath because He has rejected God’s merciful character, preferring his own righteousness to that of a God who sacrificed His only Son in a great love that the world will never understand.

Psalm 2, one of the great and foundational Psalms, states this clearly. God responds to the rebellion against Him by the kings of the earth (Gentiles). He mocks them before He takes out His wrath on them. Note that the wrath is not to pay for

their sin, but to respond to their rebellion and rejection of His provision in His Christ.

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury . . . (Psalm 2:4-5)

When one scours the Old Testament this mocking of those who were arrogant against God is seen over and over again.

Pharaoh of Egypt tried to drown the babies of God's nation Israel in the Nile, so God drowned Pharaoh's whole army in the Red Sea (as well as took all of Egypt's eldest babies in the Passover).

Ahab and Jezebel had killed Naboth to take his vineyard. Thus Elijah prophesied.

'Thus says the LORD, "In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours."' (1 Kings 21:19). ²³ "Of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.' (1Kings 21:23).

Clearly God was going to humiliate both Ahab and his wife in their death because of their treatment of Naboth.

Later when Ahab died, it becomes even more humiliating.

³⁷ So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria. ³⁸ They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (now the harlots bathed themselves *there*), according to the word of the LORD which He spoke" (1Kings 22:37-38).

Jezebel's death is likewise humiliating.

³³ He said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses, and he trampled her under foot. ³⁴ When he came in, he ate and drank; and he said, "See now to this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter." ³⁵ They went to bury her, but they found nothing more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, "This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; ³⁷ and the corpse of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, "This is Jezebel."' (2 Kings 9:33-37)

Of course, one cannot pass by the humiliation of the priests of Baal by God when Jehu trapped them inside of an arena and killed them all. The narrator makes sure that the reader is aware of the humiliation.

²⁵ Then it came about, as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the royal officers, "Go in, kill them; let none come out." And they killed them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the royal officers threw *them* out, and went to the inner room of the house of Baal. ²⁶ They brought out the *sacred* pillars of the house of Baal and burned them. ²⁷ They also broke down the *sacred* pillar of Baal and broke down the house of Baal, and made it a latrine to this day. (2 Kings 10:25-27)

In the New Testament, Judas is given a similar mocking at his death. In fact, a Psalm is quoted to demonstrate imprecation in Judas' case.

¹⁸ (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'" (Acts 1:18-20)

During this period of time while waiting for Jesus to return to judge, Revelation reveals those in heaven calling out for judgment and asking, "How long?"

And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:9).

When Jesus returns, vengeance will go forth on those who persecuted the righteous. 2 Thessalonians 1 has already been quoted. But a quick look at Revelation 19 shows that the destruction by the Rider on the White Horse will likewise be humiliating as their bodies will not be buried but will be eaten by birds, a humiliation practiced regularly by armies. Goliath threatened this very thing against David.

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those

who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." (Revelation 19:17-18)

Summary: Imprecation

The wrath of God, and even the mocking wrath of God, is difficult for a human to perceive. But this is because we have received the great mercy of God in Christ and have understood it (at least partially) and desire others to come to it. But apart from this mercy we would be under this great wrath of God for rebellion against His character, the character that gave His only Son for our sins, sins that deserved that wrath.

To make God out to be a Santa Claus character who only wants kindness toward all men, even those who reject Him forever, is to make God in our image (which we do). This is not His character. His character is perfectly good, so good that He would sacrifice Himself for His enemy. Thus when the enemy rejects the character of God that does this, there is no other choice but to receive the wrath of God, the very wrath which the propitiatory sacrifice appeased.

And there is no way that God's wrath is a pretty picture. It is bloody and full of vengeance. As God is to be glorified beyond one's imagination through His unbelievable mercy, so also God's enemies will be humiliated before Him beyond imagination.

Isaiah 63 speaks of the Messiah's return in vengeance,

² Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? ³ "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment. ⁴ "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come. (Isaiah 63:2-4)

One more final thing should be stated. We are in the age of delay between the sacrifice of Christ and the vengeful coming of Christ for judgment (and reward). The delay is the mercy of God, the patience so that men can come to Christ. We preach the wrath of God to come so that men can escape through the message of the "good news." Notice that in Psalm 2 the offer of mercy goes out to the "judges of the earth" in 2:10 and in 2:12 it states that His wrath is not yet. There is still time to "kiss the Son."

¹² Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. (Psalm 2:12).

This great God who has great wrath against sin and rebellion, gave His only Son so men could avoid that wrath, and He is patient as He delays His wrath so the message can go out to the ends of the world.

A note should be added here about the Americanization (or 20th Century) approach to wrath on unbelievers. The Western society is heading very quickly into embracing universalism eliminating the exclusiveness of Biblical Christianity. The emphasis of love without judgment has influenced the pulpits of America. The desire to have the church become acceptable to the culture has eliminated a God of wrath, for a “come join our country club” mentality. Hell has been eliminated for it is offensive to the unbeliever, who the pulpits do not want to offend so they can bring them a “kindly” Jesus. Jesus death as a very picturesque, cleaned up, death for not-so-bad sins, is the Jesus that America preaches. “Hell” has all but disappeared from the religious language. The result is that the 20th Century believer does not share God’s holiness in viewpoint, nor does he share the repulsive nature of sin. His career is ever escalating in an economically soaring nation. Death is not a benefit (as Paul in Philippians), but the desire is to live forever in this world to enjoy its benefits, and not for faithful service (as Paul). Thus we do not share an urge to see justice come to this world in the Son, which must eliminate the opposition and reward the loyal followers of the Christ.

The rejection of the imprecatory Psalms by interpreters today indicates the nature of the present day believer. It is not the imprecatory Psalms that are the problem, but man simply cannot grasp the greatness of this God, His absolute holiness and the absolute depravity of man as His enemy.

The Nature of Praise (i.e., Psalm 8)

The term for praise “Halle-lu-jah” (הַלְלִי-יָהּ) is a compound word. “Halle” is the term for praise (or ‘boasting’). The ‘-lu’ is an ending signifying “you” (2nd person plural). And the ‘Yah’ is short for YHWH. Thus the term literally means “you praise Yah” or “Praise Yah!”. It is an excited boasting about YHWH with emphasis on His attributes, His promises.

This praise or boasting can be seen in the Hebrew parallelism in the sense of public announcement of YHWH’s attributes.

22:22 I will tell (declare, rehearse, recount) of Your name to my brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will **praise** You.

Another term translated “praise” is (זָמַר). It literally (in the Piel) implies the praising by song, by a musical sound or by playing a musical instrument (cf. Psalm 7:17, 108:3).

Another term, is usually translated “thanks” (יָדָה), and this translation is probably somewhat inappropriate in most contexts in the Psalm (Note the parallelism in Psalm 6:5 and 7:17).

6:5 For there is no mention (זָכַרְתָּ) of Thee in death;
In Sheol who will give Thee thanks (יִדְוֶה)?

7:17 I will give thanks (אֲדַוֶּה) to the LORD according to His righteousness,
And will sing praise (וְאֶזְמְרָה) to the name of the LORD Most High.

It should be translated “confess” indicating a public identification with YHWH by reciting His attributes as related to the person himself. Thus the thanks is more of a declaration that I am identified with YHWH in suffering or victory, but that the relationship is stressed based on who He is as opposed to any personal entry of the reader into the formula.

The Nature of God’s Lovingkindness חַסֵּד אֱהָבָה (i.e., Psalm 25, Psalm 146)

The focus of the Psalms (and in fact the whole Bible) is the character of God, of YHWH, the covenant keeping God of the nation Israel. Probably the most

prominent of His attributes is that which is called “lovingkindness”. It is frequently *hesed*¹⁴ in the Hebrew scriptures, and *agape*¹⁵ in the Greek scriptures.

The point of these words is that God (YHWH) has a great attribute, that is, *love*. There are two aspects to this love. First of all, it is massive. It is that of the suzerain to the vassal, that is, He has displayed His great benefit on those who do not deserve it (the hopeless). Secondly, it is a one-way love. It has been displayed on one who cannot return a benefit to Him (cf. Deut. 10:14-22).

This is clear in God’s deliverance of the nation from Egypt. God’s benefit was poured on Israel, not because they were righteous, for they were stubborn (Deut. 9:6), but because He was a gracious God. He loves the hopeless. Thus man has the opportunity, through the grace of God, to represent YHWH. This gives him the high position of acting on His behalf in delegating the mercy of God to the poor, the hopeless, the alien, the widow. His reason for acting is due to YHWH’s acting in mercy toward him, and thus he acts also toward the helpless.

The wicked are not so. They see themselves as deserving of their riches, health, and other benefits of this world. Therefore they reject God’s lovingkindness and mercy, for their own self-righteousness. In accord with that they reject the poor, the helpless and the widow, since they apparently also deserve their station in life. Not only that, they do not recognize a ‘one-way love’ sourced in the giver, but recognize only those things that result in a response to themselves.

It is this lovingkindness that results in praise toward God. Since He is the ultimate giver of everything, man can do no less than praise Him for what he has and what he is. It is this lovingkindness that expressed the greatest love possible, the love that God expressed for His enemies (man) by giving His Son (Jesus). It is this love that has been placed in us, and this love that we are to express to others, based on the expression of God toward us.

The Nature of YHWH’s Name (and Adonai)

¹⁴ The love of God is determined by context as אָהַבָּ is frequently used for “love” and the context demonstrates it indicates the one-way expression of the mercy of God as part of His character.

¹⁵ Although to state that the word is used in this intense usage in all appearances would be a great generalization. The use of the words is always framed by their context.

YHWH

YHWH¹⁶ is the Name of the Israelite God, known to them through the revelation of Himself in the Covenant made with Abraham and Moses. It appears to be derived from the Hebrew verb 'to be' (היה: 'HYH', pronounced 'Hayah' "I am") and would also appear to be more precisely the third person singular of that verb, present or future tense. Thus YHWH when using the term to refer to Himself says "I AM" (or 'I WILL'), but when a worshiper says it it would be in the third person "He is" or He will", thus YHWH (יהוה; YHWH, pronounced 'Yah-way'). Frequently, particularly in the Psalms, YHWH will be shortened to YH, or "Yah".

The pronunciation of it has been lost over the centuries due to the fact that the Hebrew language only uses consonants. In addition the Jews, out of a fear of misusing the Name, avoided the pronunciation of it, by substituting *Adonai* when they came to YHWH in the text. *During* the 8th Century the Masorites pointed (or gave vowels to) the Hebrew consonants. This would allow for the pronunciation of words to continue. When they came to the word YHWH, they had such regard for the Name that they did not want anyone to pronounce it, fearing that they would break the commandment about taking the Name of YHWH in vain. Thus, to protect any reader from pronouncing the Name YHWH (or perhaps to indicate to the reader that they should pronounce *Adonai* when they came to YHWH, they gave YHWH the vowel points for *Adonai*. Later during the reformation period it was misunderstood (approximately 1518 AD, although there is some speculation of its use as early as 1100 AD) as the actual pronunciation and thus the Name ended up being mispronounced "Jehovah".¹⁷

The English translations, however, substitute the word LORD (typically all capitals) as the English equivalent, and the word Lord (capitalized first letter only) to designate *Adonai*.

Adonai (Lord):

¹⁶ Note this is a transliteration of the Hebrew. Hebrew contains consonants only. Frequently the vowels are added to make it read "Yahweh".

¹⁷ Apparently the way this came about is that the consonants Y went to the J in German. The H went to an H, the waw ("v") became a German W and the final H stayed as an H. Thus YHWH became JHVH in German. When the vowels of *Adonai* are placed on JHVH the result is JeHoVah. Thus it appears to be a German "ungrammatical aberration" (Much of this information is sourced from the Anchor Bible Dictionary, "YAHWEH").

The term in Hebrew is four radicals (consonants): אֲדֹנָי (ADNI; “Adonai”). It is derived from the first three radicals (ADN) the root means “to rule”. The “ai” ending normally is a 1st person possessive, which would be “my ruler” or “my lord (or Lord)” as in Psalm 110:1. The term however is used frequently of “The Lord” and thus becomes a technical word for “The Lord” or “The Ruler” (cf. Psalm 110:5 compared to 110:1).

Jesus

The name Jesus is the Greek ‘Ἰησοῦς’ (pronounced ‘ee-yay-sous’). It is the Greek translation (LXX) of the Old Testament “Joshua” (or “Yah saves”). The present translation preferred by Jewish Christians is Yeshua, which is actually the Aramaic (the street language during Jesus day) pronunciation of the Hebrew “Joshua” (lit. “Jehoshua”; “Yah is salvation”)

Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ)

The term Messiah is the term for God’s representative on earth, the Messiah, or the King. It is properly translated “the Anointed One” (cf. Psalm 2 for the best use of this term and its synonyms). The New Testament term is χριστός (pronounced “Christos”, meaning Christ).

The New Testament Term “Lord” as used for Jesus

The term for “Lord” as applied to Jesus, as in the “Lord Jesus Christ” would appear to be the New Testament translation of the term for YHWH in the Old Testament. The Septuagint translators had utilized the Greek ‘*kurios*’ for both *YHWH* and *Adonai* and thus it becomes somewhat blurred. However in a survey of quotations from the Old Testament as used in the New it appears that the term is more closely associated with the O.T. *YHWH*. Although, as stated, the term ‘*kurios*’ is used for both as in Luke 20:42 where both *YHWH* and *Adonai* are translated with the Greek ‘*kurios*’.

The New Testament Term “Christ” as used for Jesus

Thus the ‘*Christos*’ term would indicate the Old Testament “Messiah” or ‘Anointed One’ implying the Representative of God on earth. Probably the main passage for the use of Christ or Messiah would be Psalm 2:2.

Summary of “Lord Jesus Christ”

Thus the titles appear to indicate YHWH (The Lord), Jesus (human name meaning “Yah (or YHWH) is salvation”, and “Christos” meaning the Anointed One or Messiah. Thus combined is the name of YHWH (the Covenant Keeping God), Jesus; the Human, and Christ; the Anointed One, the Messiah.

Interpretation Methodologies for Psalms

Parallelism

Parallelism is a poetic device whereby an author may enlarge on a thought by stating it in different ways in subsequent lines (phrases). He may enlarge on it, reverse it, use different words or other formats, but his objective is to paint the picture several different ways so that the reader might understand more fully the communication of his heart.

1. Complete Parallelism

Complete parallelism is essentially where there are parallel parts (subject/verb/object) for each line.

(a) Synonymous parallelism

Each part of each line has a parallel part that is synonymous. Thus the synonym will lock in the meaning of each part by giving a synonymous word.

Then Israel came to Egypt'
Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. (105:23)

(b) Antithetic parallelism

Here each part has a parallel part but it is antithetical (opposite in meaning). Thus the antonym helps explain the opposite part, but also gives an alternative to the original sentence.

In the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
In the evening it fades and withers
(90:6)

(c) Emblematic parallelism

The first line is a symbolic part, while the second is the literal meaning of the first (could be reversed).

As a father pities his children,
So the LORD pities those who fear him. (103:13)

(d) Inverted or chiasmic parallelism

Here the subject and object are reversed in the second line to either add meaning or to demonstrate a full interactive scenario between subject and object.

Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah,
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim. (Isaiah 11:13)

2. Incomplete Parallelism

This is in essence, partial parallelism where varieties of forms take place, but without exact matches of parts.

(a) Incomplete parallelism with compensation (some terms parallel, same number of terms)

You will destroy their offspring from the earth
And their children from among the sons of
men
(21:1)

(Variation: Step Parallelism)

(b) Synonymous:

O LORD, how many are my foes,
Many have risen up against me. (Ps. 32:2)

(c) Antithetical:

The LORD knows the way of the righteous
But the way of the wicked will perish
(Ps. 1:6)

(d) Emblematic:

As a doe longs for the flowing streams
So my soul longs for you, O God. (Ps. 42:1)

Three members:

Parallelism precedes:

On You I have stayed myself from the womb,
From my mother's belly, You are my sufficiency

My praise is of You continually (Ps. 71:6)

Parallelism follows:

I will exult and rejoice in Your mercy

That You have seen my affliction,
[You] have regarded the distresses of my soul. (Ps. 31:8)

Three parallel

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the
wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of
scorners (Ps. 1:1)

Dual parallelism

For my life is spent with grief
and my years with sighing

my strength fails because of my iniquity
and my bones are consumed. (Ps. 31:11)