

Wisdom Of Solomon And Ecclesiastics

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Summary of Chapter 15:

The type of literature that is featured in this chapter is wisdom. From the passage, wisdom entails acting accordingly and making sense of life in all its complexity. The chapter incorporates several books to reveal the real and practical wisdom of literature. These Hebrew Biblical books comprise (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes) all of which were written by Solomon and the book of Psalms. Other books are Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus contained in the deuterocanonical and or apocryphal works. The unique or similar contents in each of these books highlight wisdom literature in one way or another.

The Book of Proverbs

According to this chapter and based on the rabbinic tradition, Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs while he was in his prime age. The chapter cites that the book of Proverbs has a more diverse origin other than being attributed to only Solomon, as revealed by the superscriptions of its diverse sections. The book incorporates various speakers that seek the attention of the readers regarding wisdom, peers, and parents. The book describes wisdom as beginning at home, where young people learn from their parents. The chapter also reminds the audience that having wisdom is only possible with reverence for God. That is, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom" Proverbs 9:10.

The Book of Job

The book of Job reflects wisdom differently from how Proverbs reflected it. This book uses the theme of suffering, which aims at inspiring people in different genres of life. This book does well in the art of subversion by utilizing poetry and prose to bring out its message. The critical part of this book is where God appears in the "whirlwind." Here, Job is pressed by God on his limited knowledge of the world and for that reason, wisdom appears in Job when he opens his eyes and views the world from a different perspective. Job finds a resolution to something he thought was beyond human reach.

The Book of Ecclesiastes

This book highlights the main character who is Ecclesiastes whose main goal was to find out about everything by means of wisdom. Ecclesiastes wanted to find out what exactly was the purpose of God in the world. Surprisingly, Ecclesiastes failed in his mission, and not even wisdom came to his rescue. His mission was not based on divine revelation, which highlighted what the other books concluded:

without God, there cannot be wisdom.

The Book of Ecclesiastes

Sirach, unlike Job and Ecclesiastes, draws much of the wisdom from Proverbs, where he acknowledges wisdom as fully originating from divine revelation.

Wisdom of Solomon

This book draws much of the wisdom from Israel's story of faith. Immortality is the distinctive feature in this book which is viewed as a solution to human evil. Solomon says that wisdom is a gift and only comes from God, and that is why he prays to God to give him wisdom so that he can gain immortality.

The Book of Psalms

This book introduces the features of the righteous and the wicked. The psalms in this book are the human words that are directed to God. Just like Job's suffering is reflected in the book of Psalms, and it is only the righteous who are heard by the Lord. Wisdom is reflected in how humans seek salvage from God, and that is through three different genres: complaint, praise, and thanksgiving. God listens to those who use the three genres to communicate with him, for they are the righteous ones (Psalms 2:12).

Chapter 24:

This chapter focuses on the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews. The catholic letters, which are universal and can be addressed to the whole church, are the specific type of literature found in this chapter. The chapter incorporates the books of Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, and Jude. The authors share certain contexts in the Eastern Roman Empire, even though they differ in content.

1st Peter

Peter, who claims to be an apostle of Jesus, writes from Babylon, which is regarded as a metaphor for Rome (1 Peter 5:13). The author uses various metaphors to direct his message to the readers. Peter directs his message to a group known as the Gentile Christians, who he characterizes as aliens and exiles (1 Peter 1:1-2). He reminds his readers that God has chosen to save them from their past identities through the birth metaphor. As a witness to Jesus' suffering, Peter reminds his addressees that this unjust suffering can only be vindicated if they abandon their Greco-Roman culture and rely on Jesus Christ and God.

Hebrews

In this book, the author argues for both discontinuity and continuity between the Old and the New Testaments. He bases his arguments on the Greco-Roman literary traditions, where he says that continuity depends on faith in the exclusivity of Jesus Christ over the Levitical and Mosaic sacred institutions (Hebrew 7:27-28). The author argues that Jesus Christ completed the past divine revelation. He describes Jesus as an “exact imprint image of God,” which reflects the unique and final God’s revelation in Jesus and that only those who have faith in Jesus will be restored.

James

The author, James, symbolically advises his readers to seek God’s divine during temptations to get mature faith and true wisdom. He reminds the poor not to extend their preferential to the poor since that practice only oppresses and exploits them. Again, he reminds the wealthy who mistreat the poor that they will be punished by God (James 1:9-11). James refers to the suffering of Job as an encouragement to the poor that they should maintain their faith in God and exercise patience (James 5:7-11).

Jude

The author, who claims to be the brother of James, was influenced by the traditions of Pauline. However, the geographical location of the addressees of his message remains unknown. Jude addresses the evil behaviors of some intruders, which he fails to name. Unlike other letters, Jude fails to embrace the customary epistolary of encouraging the intruders to have faith in God. However, the author reminded those who were targeted by the intruders to be restored.

2nd Peter

Here, the author, identified as Simon Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, bases his arguments on false teachers and their fate as well as the second coming of Jesus. The author does not address his message to a specific community but wants his readers to have God’s knowledge because it inspires righteous living (2nd Peter 1:3-11). Peter discredits the denial of false teachers on the 2nd coming of Christ and encourages his readers to remain faithful and reject being misled.

Analysis of Proverbs 1:1-33 and James 2:1-26

Proverbs 1:1-33

The message being delivered in this passage is about knowledge and wisdom. The passage uses poetry as a literary genre to convey its message. Proverbs 1:1-7 specifically talks about the beginning of knowledge. The passage reminds the audience that whatever they seek, they should fear the lord. The wise and the fools are used as an illustration of the beginning of knowledge in this section. The passage acknowledges those who hear and obtain guidance as the wise (1:5) and those who despise instructions and wisdom as fools. Just like the contents in Chapter 15, this passage also acknowledges parents as the ones responsible for giving wisdom to their children. The children get wisdom through the instructions they obtain from their parents. A son is reminded to hear the instructions of his father and not to forsake the teachings of his mother (1:8).

Proverbs 1:20-23 talks about the calling of wisdom. This passage reminds readers of the wisdom that calls from every corner of the world. It is upon the readers to adhere to the calling of wisdom. If they fail to take this available wisdom when it is calling on them, then they will suffer in their time of need. The wisdom will also not respond to the calling of the seekers in their time of distress and calamity strike. At the time when wisdom is calling, individuals out to use knowledge and obtain that wisdom fail to which it will be seen as if the individuals hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord (1:29). The message in this passage is that wisdom goes hand in hand with knowledge and without knowledge, there is no wisdom. (Bible Gateway, n.d.)

In my view, I concur with this passage on the beginning of knowledge and the calling of wisdom. I believe that an individual should first seek knowledge before thinking of being wise. An individual who listens and takes instructions becomes wise and knowledgeable. And the initial step toward getting knowledge is fearing the Lord. One of the noteworthy ideas in this passage is getting knowledgeable by receiving instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity. These are the acceptable ways under which God can instill knowledge in an individual. Another noteworthy idea is about tapping the wisdom that cries out loud in the streets. Only the wise will get the Lord's counsel and be free from disaster, and the fools will be destroyed by calamities and disasters, for they chose not to fear the Lord and hated knowledge.

James 2:1-26

This passage brings out two messages that the readers ought to take into consideration. First, it warns the readers about the sin of partiality, and second, it reminds the readers of the need to have faith in works. About the sin of partiality, the passage reminds the readers not to judge others based on their material wealth. The passage uses an example of a rich man and a poor one where a person welcomes a rich man and offers him a good place to sit, whereas he tells a poor man to stand over there because he wears shoddy clothes (James 2:2-3). This act shows judgment but the passage reminds the poor who are oppressed are rich in faith and whoever loves them heirs to the kingdom of God. The passage uses symbolic acts to discourage people from judging others based on material

wealth because judgment equals sin.

The second segment talks about faith with work (James 2:14-26). Again, symbolic acts are used to describe that faith without work is the same as dead. The passage gives one example that demonstrates faith without work. That is a scenario where an individual tells a person who is poorly clothed to go in peace and be filled without giving that individual the things he is in need of. This act demonstrates faith, "go in peace and be filled," but does not demonstrate work (the needy individual is not given what he lacks. The passage justifies its argument with the story of Abraham and his only son, Isaac. Abraham is referred to as righteous and a true friend of God who was justified by both faith and work when he offered to sacrifice Isaac on the altar (2:25). (Bible Gateway, n.d.)

In my view, I agree that faith without work is dead. If someone is in a position to help another one who is unfortunate but just speaks out of their mouth without any help, his utterances will be nothing, no matter how well it is articulated. Again, if a person really works by assisting the unfortunate ones but does that without faith, his work is just as good as dead. Regarding the sin of partiality, the idea that resonates with me is that of keeping the whole law. In many aspects of life, people have always thought that they are righteous by adhering to certain laws and the same time, fail at one point when, in reality, they are wrong. I was especially moved by the fact that mercy triumphs over judgment and that "judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy." (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.)

References

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