

**The unabridged writings of Fred Morris, Manna Publications**

## **The meaning of...**

# **WISDOM**

**To the Reader:** Keep your Bible beside you and read the Bible verses first. Invite a friend to study with you. You can talk together about what you have learned. You will be blessed.

**Read: Proverbs 2:1-15**

### **THE LORD GOD GIVES WISDOM**

Satan failed. When Satan tempted Eve he promised her, "When you eat...your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God..." (Gen 3:5). You will be all wise and know good and evil! Satan promised Eve, "The eyes of your understanding will be opened..." (Eph 1:18).

Eve believed Satan's lie and ate the fruit. She gave some to Adam and he ate, too. Satan hoped the first man and woman would worship him, but he was disappointed. Man began to worship himself! And that is what he has been doing ever since. Man thinks he is his own god.

### **CULTS TEACH SELF-WORSHIP**

Most cults in the world today teach self-worship. They teach that man can grow in wisdom until he becomes as wise as the Creator; indeed he can become equal with God. Every perverse teaching comes from people who "have no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18).

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, gave much time to thinking about wisdom. We believe Solomon wrote most of the Book of Proverbs, in the Bible. He wrote some of the things he learned about wisdom. He made 'Wisdom' to speak like a person.

To Solomon, the wisdom of this world was like a prostitute, calling in the street (Prov 1:20; 2:16). And he warned young men (he calls them "my son",) to listen to God's voice and not to the women of the street, "For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding" (Prov 2:6).

#### **TALK ABOUT**

1. What did Satan promise Eve (Genesis 3:5)?
2. Did Eve obey God or Satan?

**Read: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23**

### **THE WORLD'S WISDOM**

This age in which we live has a standard called "the wisdom of this world." Paul said, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight..."

So no more boasting about men and their wisdom. We, who are Christians "have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God" (1 Cor 2:12).

He has given you “all things” richly to enjoy while you live on this earth and to prepare your spirit to live in the next world. Because you have Christ, you have “all things” which includes wisdom born of God.

**Read: Luke 2:41-52**

## **THE BOY JESUS WAS WISE**

“Every year Jesus went to Jerusalem with His father and mother. They went up to the temple to celebrate the Feast of Passover.

When He was twelve years old, He went with them to Jerusalem as was their custom. Whole families travelled together – uncles, aunts, cousins and siblings of all ages.

After the Feast, they returned home, but “the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:43). His parents did not know and they travelled on for a day without missing Him. “Then they began looking for Him among their relatives and friends.”

They did not find Him, so they went back to the city. After three days of anxious search, they found Him in the temple courts. He was listening to the teachers of the law and asking them questions. “Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and His answers” (Luke 2:47).

Jesus’ father and mother did not understand (2:50) and scolded Him for causing them such anxiety. But He quietly answered them, “Didn’t you know I had to be in My Father’s house?”

His Father was in heaven. He came to do the Father’s will; He must know and understand that will and the Father, even then, had begun revealing it to Him. His mother treasured all these things and kept them hidden in her heart. For the years that followed, He worked alongside Joseph in his carpenter’s shop.

**Read: Matthew 3:13-17**

## **JESUS WAS BAPTIZED**

Being about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23), Jesus left home and went to the Jordan River where John the Baptist was baptizing those who repented. Jesus asked John to baptize Him (Matt 3:13).

John did not want to baptize Jesus. “I need to be baptized by You,” he said to Jesus. Jesus replied, “It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt 3:14-15).

Jesus had no sin (Heb 4:14-15). He did not have to be baptized for repentance. He did not have to be baptized for His own sake; He was baptized for our sakes. It was God the Father’s will that Jesus lived to the glory of God and died for the sins of mankind. Baptism is a symbol of His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-11).

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment, heaven was opened, and he (John) saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him (Jesus). And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased’” (Matt 3:16-17).

At once, the Holy Spirit filled Jesus and led Him into the desert. That same Spirit gave Him wisdom to counter Satan’s temptations (Matt 4:3-11). Every time Satan tempted Jesus, He had the words of the Scriptures ready to turn him aside. He proved, once for all time, that “the sword of the Spirit is the word of God” (Eph 6:17).

“From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near’” (Matt 4:17).

### **TALK ABOUT**

1. Why did Jesus go up to Jerusalem every year with his parents?

2. Who baptized Jesus (Matt 3:13-15)?
3. What did John see when Jesus came up out of the water?
4. What words came from heaven?

### **Read: Proverbs 3:1-8**

## **KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDS**

Solomon urges any young man who seeks wisdom to find it in God's word. Keep God's words in your heart, he said, "Then you will win favour and a good name in the sight of God and man" (Proverbs 3:4).

This tells us how important it is to read and study God's word for ourselves. Just as Jesus used God's word to fight off Satan and foil his temptations, so we must do the same. Read and store up God's truth in your heart, "so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground..." (Eph 6:13).

And so often "the day of evil" comes in the form of false teaching. "Oh," someone says, "there is no life after death. Death is the end of everything." Or, "You will come back all right. In the next life, you might be a snail."

## **REINCARNATION**

This teaching first appeared in early Hindu writings in N.E. India. It teaches that the human spirit passes through a succession of lives. These lives may be lived in animal bodies as well as human bodies.

The first century Greek mystery religions - Gnostics, Roman Stoics - established reincarnation in the west.

Paul and the apostles confronted the false teachings of Gnosticism in the first century. In the days when the New Testament church was being established, the Gnostics were busy refuting the teachings of Jesus Christ. *Gnosis* is the Greek word for knowledge. People who believed the Gnostic teaching were promised greater knowledge. They taught a basic dualism between God= Spirit and earth = matter. They saw creation as evil and opposed to good. The earth may have been good at the beginning, but it was spoiled by spirits or lesser deities as time passed.

The Romans took the teachings of the Greek stoics, that humans should be free of passion calmly accepting all things as the divine will. People were part of a universe dominated by reason. God is identified with this universal reason and one's goal must be to become part of this universal reason, to find one's proper place in the natural order of things, being self-sufficient and living with dignity and pride.

### **TALK ABOUT**

1. What is the Greek word for knowledge?
2. What did the Romans teach?

## **BEGINNINGS IN INDIA**

What began in India over 1,000 years ago, spread all over the world. It took on different names and adopted different teachings in different places. Bits and pieces remain in the New Age philosophy and many of the cults of the present day.

In India the teaching of reincarnation flourished as Hinduism; in S.E. Asia as Buddhism, in the western world as Scientology. Like the demons in the possessed man of Gadara, it is legion in its Satanic forms and practices.

## **KAMA IN INDIA**

The law of Karma says that the evil deeds of past lives influence the present life. What one does in his or her present life will impact future lives for better or for worse. Kama is the law of cause and effect, or action followed by reaction. This teaching leads to a very pessimistic view of life, that what happens is out of one's control and can be blamed on some evil deed which was done by another person.

So human existence becomes a never-ending cycle of pain, suffering and rebirth. The only hope is for self-salvation which will lead to final freedom from the endless cycle of rebirth.

The modern version of this teaching came into view in the eighteenth century as Theosophy and was modified by various psychics. They all taught that the final objective of all reincarnation was to become one with God. All proponents base their teachings on a mystical, occult world view which sees human beings as fallen yet divine and God as a state of well-being. There is no thought of a sovereign personal God who created the first human beings and will, one day, "demand an accounting for things done in the flesh" (Romans 14:12).

On the other hand, the Bible teaches that the spirit of man is immortal, that all have sinned and come short of God's standard (Romans 3:23). But God "so loved the world" that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to bear our punishment, so that all who believe might be saved (John 3:16). Man's physical body will die, once, and after that his spirit will wait the judgment day (Hebrews 9:27; Acts 17:31).

### **TALK ABOUT**

1. What is Kama?
2. Where did this philosophy begin?
3. What happens to the spirit of a man when his body dies?
4. Is everyone equally guilty of sin?

## **TRUSTING GOD'S WISDOM**

Even after we have hidden God's word in our hearts, we are not to lean on or depend on our own understanding. "In all your ways acknowledge Him (God)" Solomon wrote, "and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil" (Prov. 3:5-7).

## **MODERN SCIENTOLOGY**

The cult of modern scientology aims to advance man to total freedom. It claims to have 3,000 churches around the world. Its states, "nothing is enforced or bound by law". The scientologist accepts what suits him or her. As Paul stated so long ago, "Everything is permissible - but everything is not beneficial. Everything is permissible - but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" (1 Corinthians 10:23-24).

This life force is in every one of us, but we are ignorant of our own perfection. Scientology seeks to give man a greater knowledge of himself. Again Paul counters this notion with the words, "For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do...I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature" (Romans 7:15-18).

The life force or spirits fill all matter. Spirits were bored, so the Scientologists say, so they created the universe and built bodies for themselves. Their idea of reincarnation is that they rejuvenated themselves in endless cycles.

Those who know their Bibles know that God is the giver of life. He said to Zechariah the prophet, "This is the word of the Lord...The Lord who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him..." (Zech 12:1).

Again the writer waned us, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come... when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them - ', And the dust returns to the ground it came from and the spirit (of the man) returns to God who gave it" (Eccl 12:1,7).

Jesus told the people, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).

- Scientology accepts reincarnation; Christianity rejects it and holds to the resurrection of the body (1 Cor 15:50-57; 1 Thess 4:13-18).
- Scientology says man is basically good; Christianity teaches that no one is good. "All have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23).
- Scientology says there is no hell; Jesus spoke often of hell as the final destination of all those who reject Him (Revelation 20:10-14).
- Scientology rejects the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He created everything and that He died to save mankind (John 1:29; 3:16).
  - Scientology accepts out-of-body experiences. God condemns all forms of occultism, black magic and witchcraft (Deuteronomy 10:10-12).

#### **TALK ABOUT**

1. Where did a man's spirit come from?
2. By our spirit we can have fellowship with the living God. Do you enjoy this fellowship?
3. What fact of history made this possible?

### **Read: 1 Timothy 6:3-10**

#### **FALSE DOCTRINE**

False teachers came into the early Christian churches and argued about evil superstitions, and caused constant friction between "men of corrupt minds, who have been robbed of the truth and think that godliness is a means of financial gain..." (1 Timothy 6:4-5).

Is Scientology any different, with its eight levels of study courses at \$200,000 to \$400,000 each? There is no worship of any divine person, so we conclude that the students learn to clear their minds of preconceived ideas and are taught to worship self only. Similar instruction is found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, New Age and Judaism.

### **Read: Proverbs 9:9-12**

#### **THE FEAR OF THE LORD**

Proverbs 9:10 is one of the best known verses in the Bible and rightly so. It speaks of "the fear of the Lord..." This does not mean that we must be afraid of God punishing us. If we have confessed our sins and believe that Jesus Christ carried our sins to the cross and left them there, we have no reason to fear God.

Rather, this 'fear' means to stand in awe of God; to honour Him with our devotion and obedience. We recognize that God is Sovereign and He does as He pleases in your life and in mine. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases" (Proverbs 21:1).

#### **TALK ABOUT**

1. What does it mean to "fear of the Lord"?
2. What caused trouble in the early churches (2 Peter 3:3:10)?

### **Read: 1 Corinthians 2:4-16**

## **WISDOM FROM GOD'S SPIRIT**

There were many in the city of Corinth who boasted of their wisdom. But their wisdom was "of this world," and God would bring it to nothing (1 Cor 2:6). On the contrary, Paul said his wisdom came from the Spirit of God. He wrote, "My preaching was not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Cor 2:4-5).

**Read: Acts 9:1-19**

### **PAUL HAD GOD'S WISDOM**

Where did Paul get the Spirit of God which lived in him? The Spirit was given to him when he turned from sin and accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. This happened to him as he rode his donkey along the road to the city of Damascus (Acts 9:1-19).

Saul (as he was named then) hated Christians. Those who believed in Jesus Christ were called "people of The Way." They met in small groups, in houses, and worshipped God in the way they had been taught. Paul had been raised, as all Jews were, in Judaism and hated Gentiles coming into God's Kingdom.

So Saul persecuted the followers of The Way and did everything he could to put them in prison or kill them. Even then he carried letters from the high priest giving him the authority to put anyone who belonged to The Way in chains and take them back to Jerusalem (Acts 9:2).

As he got closer to Damascus, a great light from heaven shone around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?"

"Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

The voice from heaven answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6).

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.

Saul got up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could not see. So they led him by the hand and went on into the city of Damascus. For three days Saul was blind and he did not eat anything.

God told His servant Ananias to go to the house of Judas and ask for Saul (Acts 9:10-19). Ananias found Saul and prayed for him that he would receive his sight. God restored Saul's sight and He got up and ate food.

#### **TALK ABOUT**

1. Who was Saul?
2. Why did he hate Christians?
3. What were the early Christians called?
4. What changed Saul (Acts 9:1-18)?

**Read: Ephesians 1:15-23**

### **PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS**

Paul prayed that the Father in heaven would give the Christians at Ephesus "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" (Eph 1:17). He wanted them to know the Father better and to worship Him only. But more than this, Paul wanted them to stand against the idolatry of their city.

All around them men and women worshipped Artemis (the Romans called her Diana). Artemis brought thousands of worshippers to Ephesus every year. The craftsmen of the city made silver shrines and images of Artemis and sold them to the visitors (Acts 19:24). When Paul and his friends preached the gospel of Jesus Christ, the silversmiths saw what this would do to their business and caused a riot (Acts 19:23-41).

It requires heavenly wisdom to stand against Satan and the 'tools' he uses. Every believer must discern how and when to take a stand publicly. God will give you "the spirit of wisdom" to enable you to discern what Satan is doing. When you feel threatened by his wicked spirits, call on the blood of Jesus for protection and victory.

Paul asked the believers at Corinth, "Is not the cup...for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ" (1 Cor 10:16)? By taking the cup, we participate in Christ's death and resurrection.

God has made Christ the high priest of the eternal covenant - the New Covenant (Hebrews 13:20). He is the One who represents all who love Him. He overcame Satan for us (Hebrews 2:15) and His blood continues to give us victory (1 John 1:7).

## **Read: 1 Corinthians 2 :4-16**

### **WISDOM FROM THE SPIRIT**

Paul is not boasting about his preaching, but standing against the false teachers. They said Paul pretended to have "superior wisdom" (1 Cor 2:1).

His wisdom came from the work of the Holy Spirit in his life, Paul said. This wisdom was planned by God, before creation, to our glory (1 Cor 2:7-8). The apostles preached this wisdom and the believers had it revealed to them by God's Spirit. "None of the rulers of this world understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

The deep things of the Spirit are revealed to the believer, not to the great men of this world.

#### **TALK ABOUT**

1. What did Paul ask God to give the Christians at Ephesus (Eph 1:17)?
2. What did Paul ask for himself (Eph 6:19)?

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