

# The Wisdom of God

## MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

The thought that the brutal execution of a Jewish man in first-century Palestine could be the means by which God brings salvation to mankind is considered foolishness by the world. But it was in this very event that God demonstrated His infinite and unsearchable wisdom. In this message, Dr. Lawson provides a biblical definition of wisdom and examines God's wisdom in creation, providence, and salvation.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 55:8–9; Romans 11:33–34; 1 Corinthians 1:18–25

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To explain what wisdom is, and to show where God's wisdom is most clearly revealed
2. To show how God's wisdom ought to comfort believers who are facing difficulties or confusion
3. To commend God's infinite wisdom as an invitation to greater worship

## QUOTATIONS

*We must suffer God to be wiser than ourselves, and acknowledge that there is something sovereign in his ways not to be measured by the feeble reed of our weak understandings.*

—Stephen Charnock

*The wisdom of God in [the work of redemption] is of vast extent. The contrivance is so manifold, that one may spend an eternity in discovering more of the excellent ends and designs accomplished by it; and the multitude and vast variety of things that are, by divine contrivance, brought to conspire to the bringing about of those ends.*

—Jonathan Edwards

## LECTURE OUTLINE

### I. Definition of God's Wisdom

- A. Wisdom is the pursuit of the highest purpose and the greatest good.
  - i. In all situations, the highest and wisest goal is the glory of God and the good of His people.
  - ii. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10).
  - iii. Wisdom includes both the goal and the means to achieving that goal.
- B. God, who is all-wise, always chooses the highest end and the best means to that end.
  - i. In all circumstances, He is at work for the glory of His name and the good of His people.
  - ii. Because God is all-powerful, it is significant that His might is constantly employed for the highest purposes.

### II. God's Wisdom in Creation

- A. One of the major arenas where God's wisdom can be seen is in His creative acts and the things He has made.
  - i. The sky and the heavens proclaim God's glory through their majesty and splendor (Ps. 19:1–6).
  - ii. John Calvin described the earth as a theater where God's wisdom and power are always on display.
  - iii. The world, in its intricate beauty, illustrates certain aspects of God's character (Rom. 1:20).
- B. Even God's means of bringing the universe into existence was in keeping with His power and glory.
- C. The order and design of the created order demonstrate the wisdom of its Creator.
  - i. The angle and rotation of the earth was perfectly engineered to promote the flourishing of living things on this planet.
  - ii. The regularity of the winds, tides, and seasons attests to God's power and genius.

### III. God's Wisdom in Providence

- A. With His glory as the goal, God orchestrates human circumstances so as to bring about this highest end.
  - i. God sovereignly and wisely arranges the specific details of each person's life (Acts 17:26–27).

- ii. Though we may not understand why certain aspects of our lives are the way they are, Scripture affirms that God works through all circumstances to achieve His purposes in us.
- iii. In His wisdom, God uses trials and difficulties to draw His children closer to Himself and to make them more like Jesus Christ.
- B. Often, seemingly dark and hopeless circumstances later reveal God's sovereign wisdom at work.
  - i. Though Joseph's brothers intended evil against him, God intended that their actions would bring about good (Gen. 50:20).
  - ii. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the greatest evil ever committed, but God predetermined that Christ's death would bring about His perfect plan of salvation.
- C. In all situations, God is wisely carrying out His master plan for the glory of His name and the good of His people.

#### IV. God's Wisdom in Salvation

- A. God's plan of salvation is both simple enough to explain to a child and intricate enough to defy the wisdom of the most brilliant human minds.
  - i. Through Christ's law-keeping, our law-breaking is pardoned.
  - ii. Because God's wrath and curse fell upon the innocent, the guilty experience God's favor and blessing.
  - iii. Amid His apparent defeat by sin and death, Christ won a decisive victory over the powers of darkness.
- B. Even though God's redemptive plan may appear to be folly to those who have earthly wisdom, God "chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor. 1:27).

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Even works of evil and hatred are a part of God's wise plan.
  - a. True
  - b. False
2. God's wisdom is best described as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. His knowledge of everything
  - b. The purity of His thoughts
  - c. His choice of the highest end and the best means to that end
  - d. The quality of His knowledge that distinguishes His thoughts from man's
3. Because God is ultimately wise, all of the following are true *except* \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. The history of the world will lead to His glory
  - b. His wise choices will always be comprehensible to people
  - c. Studying the natural world reveals His wisdom
  - d. His providential choices will always have their desired end

4. God's wisdom is best displayed in the works of nature.
  - a. True
  - b. False

#### BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can meditating on God's wisdom help you or someone you know to be comforted when reflecting on the difficulties of life, both past and present?
2. Many people, even those who claim not to be religious, find their emotions stirred when viewing nature. How can you use opportunities like these to point them to the God whose wisdom created the natural world?
3. Are there times in your life when it feels like God did *not* choose the best means to accomplish His glorifying end? How can considering the wisdom of the cross, which is foolishness to the world (1 Cor. 1:18), bring clarity and renewed trust in His plan?
4. How should your everyday decisions be affected by a consideration of God's wisdom and the final goal to which His wisdom is directed?