

# *Out of Chaos: Let Our Ordered Lives Confess the Beauty of Peace*

## *An Introduction to the Wisdom Books*

### **Session 6: Wisdom in the Epistles and Gospels:**

**New Testament Epistles:** Wisdom is pervasive throughout the NT as well as the HB, although we have not always been aware of her presence. I've listed several citations that are noteworthy.

#### **Hebrews 12**

<sup>4</sup> In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood.

<sup>5</sup> You have also forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons:

“My child, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord  
or lose heart when reproved by him;

<sup>6</sup> for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines;  
he scourges every son he acknowledges.”

<sup>7</sup> Endure your trials as “discipline”; God treats you as children. For what child is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup> If you are without discipline, in which all have shared, you are illegitimate not children. <sup>9</sup> Besides this, we have had our earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not [then] submit all the more to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup> They disciplined us for a short time as seemed right to them, but he does so for our benefit, in order that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup> At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it.

<sup>12</sup> So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. <sup>13</sup> Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed.

#### **I Peter: 1**

20 He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, 21 who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 Since you have purified yourselves by obedience to the truth for sincere mutual love, love one another intensely from a [pure] heart. 23 You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God, 24 for:

"All flesh is like grass,  
and all its glory like the flower of the field;  
the grass withers,  
and the flower wilts;  
25 but the word of the Lord remains forever."

This is the word that has been proclaimed to you.

### **I Peter 3**

8 Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. 9 Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For:

"Whoever would love life  
and see good days  
must keep the tongue from evil  
and the lips from speaking deceit,  
11 must turn from evil and do good,  
seek peace and follow after it.  
12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous  
and his ears turned to their prayer,  
but the face of the Lord is against evildoers."

### **I Peter 4**

<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be serious and sober for prayers. <sup>8</sup> Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup> As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. <sup>11</sup> Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### **I Peter 5**

5 Likewise, you younger members, be subject to the presbyters. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for:

"God opposes the proud  
but bestows favor on the humble."

6 So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. 7 Cast all your worries upon him because he cares for you.

## Colossians 1:15-20

The most important reference to Wisdom in the epistles is found in Colossians. This is an ancient early hymn which brings the wisdom tradition to its culmination in Christ:

He is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of all creation.  
for in him were created all things in  
heaven and on earth,  
the visible and the invisible,  
whether thrones or dominions or  
principalities or powers;  
all things were created through him  
and for him.

He is before all things,  
and in him all things hold together.

He is the head of the body, the church.  
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,  
that in all things he himself might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell,  
and through him to reconcile all things for him,  
making peace by the blood of his cross  
through him whether those on earth or those in heaven

**Jesus demonstrates the same form as other wisdom teachers in his parables,** which are narrative developments of Hebrew proverbs. That openness to experience inclines to keep wisdom instruction short of absolute conclusion. Jesus reinterprets the law, takes the wisdom of the previous generations light-years beyond. In His dialog and dispute with Pharisees in the Gospels, Jesus continues probing what an ordered life requires and permits.

**Matthew 5:** The Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount

**The Sermon on the Mount.** <sup>1</sup> When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> He began to teach them, saying:

### The Beatitudes

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are they who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek,

for they will inherit the land.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the clean of heart,  
for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The beatitudes bear similarities to wisdom statements in various HB writers:

**Job 5:17:**

How happy is the one whom God reproves;  
therefore do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

**Daniel 12:12**

<sup>12</sup> Happy are those who persevere and attain the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

**Sirach 14:1-2**

Happy are those who do not blunder with their lips,  
and need not suffer remorse for sin.  
2 Happy are those whose hearts do not condemn them,  
and who have not given up their hope.

**Other Gospels examples:**

**Luke 7:31-35:** <sup>31</sup> To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup> They are like children sitting in the market-place and calling to one another,

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;  
we wailed, and you did not weep.”

<sup>33</sup> For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, "He has a demon"; <sup>34</sup> the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" <sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, wisdom is vindicated by all her children.'

