

***Commentary on Proverbs 8:22-35***

***International Bible Lessons***

**Sunday, March 4, 2012**

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, March 4, 2012**, is from **Proverbs 8:22-35**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse by verse **International Bible Lesson Commentary** below. The **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, which are also available on the **Bible Lesson Forum**, will aid teachers in class preparation and in conducting class discussion. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **International Bible Lessons Commentary Index**. The weekly **International Bible Lesson** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **The Oklahoman** newspaper.

***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

**Proverbs 8:22-35**

**(Proverbs 8:22)** The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago.

The “me” in this verse is wisdom. Wisdom means the quality or “power of judging rightly and following the most sound course of action, based on our knowledge, experience, understanding, and good judgment” (Webster’s Dictionary). In this chapter wisdom is personified; which means wisdom is represented as a person. The writer does not teach that God created wisdom as a woman (see Proverbs 8:1), or that before God created anything else He created wisdom as a person. The verse teaches that before God took action in creation (or ever takes action) that He does so wisely or with wisdom. God has wise reasons for all that He does. God does not think or act irrationally. We can always trust God to act wisely. In spite of some of the appearances of our world today (which many times are the result of human sin), God always acts wisely.

**(Proverbs 8:23) Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.**

God thought, God reasoned, God chose to act in wisdom before God created the heavens and the earth and anything related to the earth. When we look at the earth or nature as created by God, we see the results of God acting wisely. In creation, God did nothing unwisely or without good reasons. When God relates to sinful human beings and the results of human sin, He does so with wisdom.

**(Proverbs 8:24) When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.**

The writer of Proverbs wants to elaborate on the fact that God's wisdom preceded and informed everything God did in the creation of our world; such as, providing water with all of its qualities for refreshment, thirst quenching, and cleansing. The beauty and sound of a bubbling spring God created for our enjoyment and to meet our many needs.

**(Proverbs 8:25) Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth—**

God used good judgment when He created the ocean depths, when He created ponds, lakes, springs, and rivers, with their life-giving waters that flow into larger rivers and finally into the ocean. God followed the right course of action when He shaped the mountains, the valleys, and the plains. We do not need to doubt God's good judgment when we see anything or anyone He has made.

**(Proverbs 8:26) when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil.**

The grandeur of the lofty mountains and the rivers for navigation inspire our worship of God, but God also

used good judgment when He created the earth under our feet and soil in which to plant our crops or grow grasses to feed the wild and domesticated animals. God created the best soil in the best places for the best plant types. God created the soil for people to work in planting and harvesting, to create pots for cooking, and to create sculptures for beauty.

**(Proverbs 8:27) When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,**

When God created the heavens, His wisdom influenced Him to create its boundaries; where clouds can provide rain and above which clouds cannot rise. His wisdom also influenced Him to create clear skies so we can see the sun and the stars and the moon, and also cloudy skies to give us beauty, cool days, and variety as we look to heaven. The stars of heaven provide means of navigation because God fixed them in relation to our needs. God created the limits of the oceans to provide dry land upon which to live, work, and worship God.

**(Proverbs 8:28) when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep,**

When we think of the skies being made “firm,” we remember that they first supported the birds in flight and the clouds in the sky. Now the skies provide firm

support for the kites we fly and the airplanes that carry thousands of people from place to place everyday. The currents of air, wisely and rightly used, will provide firm support for all things that fly. God created the ocean depths with plants and sea creatures best suited to live at various depths and provide food for one another as well as human beings. The oceans also provided the first means for transportation as ships sailed from continent to continent.

**(Proverbs 8:29) when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,**

When God wisely created, He used infinite foresight and knew what He wanted to achieve for thousands of years based on what He created in the beginning. He planned the boundaries of sea and dry land to provide homes and security for those He created. God knew about and planned for the consequences of human choices for good and for evil, and how human choices would have an effect on land and sea. God planned wisely with regard to all human actions.

**(Proverbs 8:30) then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,**

The writer continues with the personification of wisdom. Wisdom was “beside God,” because wisdom guided all of God’s thoughts and actions. A “master worker” is experienced and highly skilled above the apprentice, who is just learning a trade or craft. God’s wisdom in evaluating what He had done gave God delight, and He rejoiced when He created all things good. In Genesis 1, God saw that what He had done was good and that was God’s evaluation of His achievements, which brought Him rejoicing.

**(Proverbs 8:31) rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.**

When God created human beings in His own image (see Genesis 1:27), He did so wisely and after careful planning. Being created in His image means human beings can choose to think, plan, and create wisely (and after careful planning too). When we carefully study God’s creation, creatures, or human beings in detail, we see something of the wisdom of God; and just as God delights in what He created so can we. We can delight in His creation and also delight in what we create as His children. He delights in the good creations of each of His children.

**(Proverbs 8:32) And now, my children, listen to me: happy are those who keep my ways.**

God created us and God wisely calls us His people, His children. God did not abandon us to figure out how

best to live according to our construction and relationships with God, His created universe, and other people. God wisely spoke to us and gave us commands and instructions that will make us happy if we keep them. God inspired the prophets and the apostles in the Bible (in the Old and New Testaments) to record His words and His actions in history regarding His relationship with people, both the obedient and disobedient (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). He sent Jesus, the Son of God, to explain the truth clearly (see John 16:37).

**(Proverbs 8:33) Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.**

A wise person will believe in God and seek instruction from God, the wise God Who created him. From observation and the ability to reason wisely, we know that God is wise and created wisely (the Book of Proverbs clearly teaches that we have this power of observation and deduction). And in addition, our wise God revealed to us in words that we can understand how to live in the world He created according to the way He designed and created us to live. Just as God acts wisely, because He created us in His image, we can reason and act wisely by obeying God.

**(Proverbs 8:34) Happy is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.**

We are happy when we listen to wisdom and do what wisdom teaches each day. Love of wisdom should motivate us to listen for wisdom to speak to us by using our sound reason as we first study the Bible with the intention to obey God in everything, and as we secondly study the world God has made with reason and order to instruct us. We need to give attention to wisdom's guidance from God each day, knowing that God's wisdom will never contradict what the Bible teaches, for God will not contradict himself.

**(Proverbs 8:35) For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD;**

Wisdom, wise advice, instruction from God on how best to plan, choose, conduct our lives, is something we need to seek every day, especially from our study of the Bible. God's wisdom revealed in the Bible and our acting according to God's wisdom will lead us to live in a wholesome and morally upright way. Thus, we will find life and receive favor from the LORD.

**(Proverbs 8:36) but those who miss me injure themselves; all who hate me love death. (Not in original Bible lesson, but important.)**

It is often important for us to see two sides of a coin or two sides of the truth so we will not be deceived by a counterfeit coin or a falsehood. Verse 36 helps us understand the truth more clearly through the solemn warning of the "other side." The LORD will bless us



and meet our needs in ways that would not be wise for Him to do so if we persisted in living unwisely and wrong. There is the danger of being deceived by a “false wisdom,” as Paul pointed out, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8). Many have been deceived by false philosophies to their own hurt and the hurt of others. Hating the wisdom of God or loving the wisdom of the world are the same thing and it will lead to death; sometimes physically but assuredly spiritually (unless a person returns to God and to living according to His wisdom “according to Christ,” Who came to seek and to save the lost).

### **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Why can the Bible’s use of personification be confusing sometimes for some people?
2. Why is it important for the Bible (and for believers) to teach people that God acts with wisdom and always acts wisely?
3. Why do we need the teachings of the Bible in addition to what we can learn about God from our observing the world and reasoning from what we observe?

4. Give some possible reasons why God delights in the human race.

5. Read Proverbs 8:32-35 again. Now, read Proverbs 8:36 (though it was not included in our Bible lesson for today). Why do you think God inspired the writer of this chapter to include verse 36?

Write your comments, suggestions, and thoughts on the [Bible Lesson Forum](http://biblelessonforum.com/) at <http://biblelessonforum.com/>. Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson* at [International Bible Lessons](http://internationalbiblelessons.org) at <http://internationalbiblelessons.org>.

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