

Message #61

Proverbs 16:31-33

GOD'S WISDOM MAY BE EVIDENCED AT EVERY AGE, BY EVERY PERSONALITY AND IN EVERY SITUATION OF LIFE.

There is no limit to developing the wisdom of God. There is no end to the acquisition of knowledge in order to gain the wisdom of God.

TRUTH #1 – Honorable age is acquired by a godly life. 16:31

There are many things in Proverbs which bring a legitimate form of dignity and royalty to a man: 1) His wife (12:4); 2) His wealth (14:24); and His children (17:6). But the area this Proverb wants to stress is a man's age. Perhaps there is no greater crown of honor than one who has gracefully matured in the things of God and possesses an elderly, godly dignity.

The term "gray head" is Hebrew symbolism that refers to a person who is aging. During ancient times, in which Solomon lived, age was highly esteemed. In fact, it was assumed that longevity in life was the result of a life of godliness (i.e. Ps. 55:23). Older people were very valuable and to not esteem them was to commit serious sin against God (Is. 3:5).

This proverb **is not saying** that all people with gray hair are wise or honorable. In fact, the physiological reason that hair turns gray is because the pigment of coloring is no longer produced in hair roots, so new hairs grow in either gray or white. What this text is saying is that an elderly person who has been righteous is one who is very honorable in the sight of God.

TRUTH #2 – Real strength is found in a controlled life. 16:32

The concept of being "slow to anger" is a critical part of wisdom; one that can control his or her emotions is a strong and mighty person with God. The Bible has much to say about a quick-tempered person: 1) He is foolish (Prov. 14:17); 2) One not quick-tempered has great understanding (Prov. 14:29); 3) He is weak (Prov. 25:28); 4) He sins (James 1:19-20). The greatest warfare in life is with our self! The greatest military conquering one can achieve is the conquering of self. One who has disciplined himself is mighty in God's sight.

TRUTH #3 – God's sovereignty is involved in all of life. 16:33

Just as Solomon began the chapter speaking of the sovereignty of God, so he ends it with the same theme. It is always the mark of wisdom to consider the sovereignty of God in every circumstance of life. In the Jewish mind, casting lots appealed to the sovereignty of God. 1) Lots were used to determine the allotment of land (Josh. 14:1-2); 2) Lots were used to determine the allotment of temple duties (I Chron. 25:8); 3) Lots were used to determine the officers for sacred service (I Chron. 24:5); 4) Lots were used to determine who lived in Jerusalem (Neh. 11:1); 5) Lots were used to resolve serious problems (Achan-Josh. 7:16-20; Jonathon-I Sam. 14:14-43; Jonah-Jonah 1:7).

In the N.T., lots were sometimes used in making special decisions: 1) Zacharias was allowed to perform a special priestly service by lot (Luke 1:8-9); Matthias was named one of the twelve by lot (Acts 1:20-26).

The point Solomon wanted to make was the fact that the lots were cast by men, but the judgment or decision which the lot brings was carefully orchestrated and controlled by God. In other words, man could cast lots, but the outcome was God's.

One thing we must observe about lots is that lots were cast prior to Pentecost. Today, we have a much more sure method of decision making—the Word of God (II Pet. 1:19). Dr. Robert Alden's comments are worth considering on this subject: "Does this mean that the Bible advocates making difficult decisions by means of the lot? The traditional answer to this question is one I agree with; today we have so much more revelation that we need not resort to the lot. Remember too, even Proverbs recommended the use of multiple counselors (11:14; 15:22 and 24:6). Still a situation might arise where Scripture is silent, counsel is divided, and a believer might want to use something like a lot in connection with prayer, that God might make His will made known through it."

Solomon's main point is that all things are under the sovereign control of God, and nothing happens by chance.

This revelation should prompt each of us to live a wise, godly life. When our hair turns gray, He is behind it. When circumstances arise that could cause us to lose control, He is behind the circumstances.