

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 28

Ephesians 5:17

Ephesians 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

THERE should be no greater pursuit in the Christian's life, than the pursuit of coming to a full and complete *understanding what the will of the Lord is*. Without this spiritual insight, which men cannot gain on their own, it is impossible to either be saved by God, or walk worthy of Him. The necessity of both coming to know, and obey God's will in our life, is evidenced in Jesus' words throughout Scripture.

Ultimately, there is no connection to the Son of God, nor to be reckoned as of His family, if God's will either is not known, or obeyed in the life.

Mark 3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

It is also not mere speech, or confession of belief in Jesus, that can save him, without actually doing the will of the Father in heaven.

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Though this natural and earthly world will pass, God's Word assures us, that those who do the will of God, shall abide forever.

I John 2:16–17 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Psalm 73, which we shall study, is a psalm written by Asaph, a musician and prophet of David. It is a psalm of a spiritually naive man, who was ready to depart from piety, because of his lack of understanding concerning divine will, and ultimately the end of the wicked. Because Asaph's occupation was centered upon self, and his own personal interests, he envied the wicked, and as a result was almost willing—proven by his own words—to depart from the Lord, and to live in the same ungodly manner as them. In the end Asaph's spiritual ignorance of divine will, and lack of trust in God, nearly led to his apostasy.

Psalm 73:1–13 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

²But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

³For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

⁴For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.

Asaph's
spiritual
condition

The reason
Asaph was
close to
departing
from the
Lord

⁵ *They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.*

⁶ *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*

⁷ *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*

⁸ *They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.*

⁹ *They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.*

¹⁰ *Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*

¹¹ *And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?*

¹² *Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*

¹³ *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 73:13) *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain*—That is, There is no advantage in all my efforts to become pure and holy. It does not assist me in obtaining the favor of God; and it would be just as well to live a sinful life—to indulge in the pleasures of sense—to make the world my portion. Nothing is to be gained by all my painful efforts at self-discipline; by all my endeavors to become righteous. It would have been as well for me—or better—if I had lived a life of sin like other people. The righteous obtain from God fewer blessings than the wicked; they have less happiness and less prosperity in this world; they are subjected to more trouble and sorrow; and to all else there must be added the struggles, the conflict, the warfare, the painful effort “to be” pure, and to lead a holy life, all of which is now seen to be of no advantage whatever. Such thoughts as these were not confined to the psalmist. They are

thoughts which will start up in the mind, and which it is not easy to calm down.

And washed my hands in innocency—That is, It has been of no use that I have washed my hands in innocency. The word “innocency” here means “purity.” He had washed his hands in that which was pure; as, pure water. To wash the hands is emblematic of innocence or purity. (END QUOTE)

Asaph's primary sin originated from the false belief that unless the Lord blesses us materially, and grants us whatever we fleshly desire, then somehow He has failed us. Ultimately Asaph's carnal logic was, if the Lord will not fulfill human will, then it is foolish to obey divine will. This dangerous un-spiritual sentiment is common today, when sinners both believe and confess, that God's primary role in their life, is to please and serve them. That the Lord should be their servant, and not He theirs. That unless God provides everything that the sinner desires, then God, and His Son, remain unworthy to follow.

It was not until Asaph entered the sanctuary of God, that he perceived the great and egregious sin he hath both thought and spoken.

Psalm 73:14–17 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

¹⁵ *If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.*

¹⁶ *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;*

¹⁷ *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*

Asaph, like many before him, and after, only came to realize his sin, when he entered into God's presence, and was

Asaph's illumination

The reason Asaph was close to departing from the Lord

Asaph's foolish and untrue belief

enlightened by the Lord to spiritually understand, that it is really the wicked who have placed their feet on slippery places, and the wicked whose ultimate end is destruction.

Psalm 73:18–20 *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.*

¹⁹ *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*

All who are in sin, much like himself, Asaph likens to being in a dream, that when once awakened from it, a person shall despise both who they are, and what they have done.

Psalm 73:20 *As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 73:20) *As a dream when one awaketh*—Their prosperity is like the visions of a dream; the reality is seen when one awakes. A man in a dream may imagine that he is a king; that he dwells in a palace; that he is surrounded by flatterers and courtiers; that he walks in pleasant groves, listens to the sounds of sweet music, sits down at a table loaded with the luxuries of all climes, and lies upon a bed of down. He may awake only to find that he is encompassed with poverty, or that he is on a bed of languishing, or that he is the miserable tenant of a hovel or a dungeon. The reality is when he awakes. So it is in regard to our present condition on earth. The reality is seen when the dream—the gorgeous dream—of life is over. . . .

Thou shalt despise their image—The image that floated before their imaginations in the

dream of life. Thou wilt pay no attention to it; there is no reality in it; it will at once vanish. In the future world, God will pay no regard to the dreams of human life, to the outward show, to the appearance; but the affairs of eternity will be regulated by what is real - by that which constitutes the character of the man. By that, and not by the vain dreams of the world, will the destiny of people be determined. (END QUOTE)

Asaph, after being led out of his previous delusion, is now fully aware of his sin, and humbly confesses through genuine repentance, his prior sin and ignorance.

Psalm 73:21–22 *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*

²² *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Prov. 73:22) *So foolish was I, and ignorant*—Such low and imperfect views did I take of the subject. The margin is, "I knew not." So the Hebrew: "And I am brutish, and know not;" that is, I did not understand the case; I had no correct views in regard to it.

I was as a beast before thee—Margin, as in Hebrew, "with thee." That is, in thy very presence; or, I was guilty of such foolishness in the very presence of my Maker. If it had been when I was alone, or when no one saw me, the folly would not have been so aggravated, and so much to be regretted, but it was when the very eye of God was upon me. Compare Isaiah 1:7; Jeremiah 7:30; Jeremiah 18:10; Psalm 51:4.¹ When he says that he was as a beast, he means that he was stupid and senseless; he had no proper understanding of the case; he did not take any just views of it. (END QUOTE)

¹ Isa. 1:7 *Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.*

Jer. 7:30 *For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.*

Jer. 18:10 *If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

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In retrospect Asaph's sin originated in trusting in himself and his own understanding; a great spiritual error, which God's Word warns all saints, to never engage in. (Prov. 3:5–6) *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Ultimately it is impossible to trust in the Lord with all your heart, if there is any leaning upon your own understanding. For even a little trust in self, and one's own opinions, thoughts, or views, shall injure and potentially destroy, any chance of fully following the Lord and His will for your life.

The reason also that sinners trust in their own hearts and minds, is because they remain ignorant of the fact that God's ways, and God's thoughts, are infinitely higher than their own. (Isa. 55:9) *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

(Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Isa. 55:9) The appeal, to leave their own way and their own thoughts, and yield themselves to God the Redeemer, and to His word, is now urged on the ground of the heaven-wide difference between the ways and thoughts of this God and the despairing thoughts of men (Isaiah 40:27; Isaiah 49:24),² and their aimless labyrinthine (LAB-uh-RINN-teen) ways. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah: no,

heaven is high above the earth; so high are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts." The *kī (imo) (kee)* [Heb. word translated "for"] introduces the undeniable statement of a fact patent to the senses, for the purpose of clearly setting forth, by way of comparison, the relation in which the ways and thoughts of God stand to those of man. (END QUOTE)

It is primarily man's conceit that prevents him from pursuing divine will, and man's pride, that keeps him estranged from God.³ Consequently, the Scripture warns those who believe themselves smart, and ultimately smarter than God, and/or wise in their own eyes, to abandon such a belief, lest true wisdom is never gained. (Prov. 3:7) *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.* The scriptures plainly teach us that to gain true wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, sinners must first realize that as fallen men, they actually have none. That one of the consequences of being born in sin, is that we are born absent divine wisdom, or any true understanding of God, and His ways with man.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Prov. 3:7) *Be not wise in thine own eyes*; be not puffed up with vain conceit of thine own wisdom, as if that were sufficient for the conduct of all thine affairs without direction or assistance from God, or without the advice of others.

Fear the Lord: this he adds, because the reverence and dread of the Divine Majesty will make a man, when he compareth himself with God, little and vile in his own eyes. Rev-

Ps. 51:4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

2 Isa. 40:27 *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?*

Isa. 49:24 *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?*

3 Ps. 10:4 *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

Jas. 4:6 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. I Pet. 5:5 ... God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

Prov. 8:13 *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

erence God's wisdom, and thou wilt despise thine own. (END QUOTE)

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Prov. 3:7) There is not a greater enemy to the fear of the Lord in the heart, than self-conceit of our own wisdom. (END QUOTE)

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Prov. 3:7) The great hindrance to all true wisdom is the thought that we have already attained it. (END QUOTE)

(*Socrates*) I know one thing: that I know nothing.⁴ (END QUOTE)

The essential ingredient to truly becoming spiritually wise, and gaining divine understanding, lies in the inward, and most importantly, genuine spiritual realization, that it is only from the Lord, and not ourselves, that truth is really found. (Prov. 2:6) *For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Prov. 2:6) *For the Lord giveth wisdom.* The Lord Jehovah is the only and true Source of wisdom. ... The two coefficients to our obtaining wisdom are our efforts and God's assistance. ... Out of his mouth (מִפִּי, *mippiv*) (mip-PEE-oo); *ex ore ejus* [Latin](eks OH-reh AY-yuss); God is

here spoken of anthropologically. He is the true Teacher. The meaning is that God communicates wisdom through the medium of his Word (Delitzsch. Pi.). The law proceeds from his mouth (Job 22:22⁵). (END QUOTE)

In contrast to those who humbly seek divine wisdom,⁶ and regard it as their greatest treasure in life, are those whom God's Word reveals in Scripture, as *fools*, individuals whose fleshly confidence remains in self, and believe their own minds, views, and reasonings as capable of leading their life and generally, all others around them. (Prov. 12:15) *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Prov. 12:15) *The way of a fool*—The counsel and course which his own mind suggests to him in ordering his affairs; *is right in his own eyes*—Highly pleases him, so that he neglects and despises the opinions and advices of others; *but he that hearkeneth, &c., is wise*—That distrusts his own judgment, and seeks counsel from others. (END QUOTE)

The reason sinners, and even many professed Christians lack divine insight, is because they inherently despise both wisdom and instruction. Thus, though divine wisdom from above is available to them,⁷ fools, because of being proud of heart,⁸ ultimately despise it. (Prov. 1:7)

4 Common paraphrase of Plato's *Apology* (21d).

5 Job 22:22 *Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.*

6 Prov. 2:3–6 *Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; ⁴If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; ⁵Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. ⁶For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.* I Kgs. 4:29 *And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.*

Matt. 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Prov. 16:16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Prov. 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

7 Jas. 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Prov. 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

8 *Prov. 16:5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*

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The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Prov. 1:7) *Despise wisdom and instruction*; are so far from attaining true wisdom, that they despise it, and all the means of getting it; which fully proves what he now said, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (END QUOTE)

What the Bible defines as a fool is defined in Scripture, as one who trusts in his own heart; one who believes that truth rests in himself, and consequently feels no need for God, or to be led by Him. (Prov. 28:26) *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Prov. 28:26) *He that trusteth in his own heart*, is confident in his own wisdom (comp. 1 Corinthians 3:18, sq.); he will perish in his folly.

But whoso walketh wisely.—Literally, *in wisdom*, which begins with the “fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 9:10⁹), “shall be delivered” from the trouble into which the “fool” is brought by his self-confidence. (END QUOTE)

Last, one of the great markers to determine if we ourselves, potentially still remain to a degree a fool, is if when higher understanding is brought to us, we choose rather to express only our opinion. (Prov.

18:2) *A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Prov. 18:2) *But that his heart may discover itself*—i.e., unless his cleverness can be displayed thereby; he does not prize understanding for itself, apart from his own interests. (END QUOTE)

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Prov. 18:2) Another form of egotism. In “understanding,” i.e., self-knowledge, the “fool” finds no pleasure; but self-assertion, talking about himself and his own opinions, is his highest joy. (END QUOTE)

(Pulpit Commentary, Prov. 18:2) *A fool hath no delight in understanding.* This may mean that he takes no pleasure in the wisdom of others, is self-opinionated; or, it may be, does not care for understanding in itself, apart from the use which he can make of it. Vulgate, “The fool receives not the words of wisdom;” Septuagint, “A man of no sense has no need of wisdom.” To try to teach a fool is to cast pearls before swine, and to give that which is holy unto dogs. *But that his heart may discover itself*; i.e. his only delight is in revealing his heart, displaying his un-wisdom and his foolish thoughts, as in Proverbs 12:28; Proverbs 13:16; Proverbs 15:2.¹⁰ He thinks that thus he is showing himself superior to others, and benefiting the world at large. (END QUOTE)

In stark contrast to fools, are those divinely taught by God; who, being humble in

Prov. 21:4 *An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.*

9 Prov. 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*

10 Prov. 12:28 *In the way of righteousness is life: and in the pathway thereof there is no death.*

Prov. 13:16 *Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.*

Prov. 15:2 *The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*

heart,¹¹ are richly favored by the Lord.¹² Evidence of this favor in action, is when Jesus revealed that those sent by Him, and who speak as His Spirit guides them, shall have no one able either to refute what they say, or properly resist the truth that is revealed. This was, and still is, Jesus' promise to all those sent to speak in His name. (Luke 21:15) *For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Luke 21:15) A mouth—Eloquence, ability to speak as the case may demand. Compare Exodus 4:11.¹³

Gainsay—Speak against. They will not be able to “reply” to it, or to “resist” the force of what you shall say. (END QUOTE)

Ultimately when a man has been given by divine grace, the Spirit of wisdom,¹⁴ then not even his enemies shall be able

to resist His words, insight, and the truth of God he reveals. An example of this is the New Testament figure, Stephen, who when addressing the religious Jews of his day,ⁱ none were able to resist the wisdom, and/or the Spirit, by which he spake. (Acts 6:10) *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he [Stephen] spake.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Acts 6:10) *not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake*—What he said, and the power with which he spake it, were alike resistless. (END QUOTE)

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Acts 6:10) *Not able to resist*; they did oppose it, but ineffectually. ...

The spirit; the Holy Ghost directing him, and putting a Divine power upon what he spake,

11 Col. 3:12 *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

Jas. 4:10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

I Pet. 5:5 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

II Chron. 7:14 *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

12 Mic. 6:8 *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

Matt. 18:4 *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Isa. 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

I Pet. 5:5–6 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. ⁶Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

Luke 18:13–14 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

13 Exod. 4:11 *And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?*

14 Exod. 28:3 *And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. Exod. 31:3 *And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,**

Deut. 34:9 *And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.*

Isa. 11:2 *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*

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according to the promise, Matthew 10:20.¹⁵
(END QUOTE)

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah was also a man, to whom God touched His mouth, and gave him the spirit of wisdom and understanding. These spiritual gifts were necessary for Jeremiah first to know the will of the Lord, and second, to boldly and successfully, proclaim that same Word and will of God to sinful Israel. (Jer. 1:9) *Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*

(Benson Commentary, Jer. 1:9) *Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth—*This appeared to the prophet to be done in his vision; whereby he was taught that the divine help should go along with him, that the gift of utterance should be bestowed upon him, and that he should be able to declare the divine commands in a proper spirit and manner: compare Isaiah 6:7;¹⁶ and Isaiah 51:16.¹⁷ *Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth—*By the seeing of this symbolical action in his vision, and the hearing of these words, Jeremiah could not but be assured that he should be able to speak in the proper language of a prophet, or with words becoming his office, and that he should have that firmness and boldness given him which were necessary for the purpose. Jeremiah does not indeed equal Isaiah in eloquence of speech, but he seems to have been no way inferior to him in firmness of mind. (END QUOTE)

What these records teach us, like Proverbs 2:6 revealed, is that it is only *the LORD [Who] giveth [true] wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.* Thus if the Lord does not impart spiritual wisdom to a man, then he shall undoubtedly live his entire natural and earthly life without it. Since wisdom, and especially spiritual wisdom, is a gift from God,¹⁸ and cannot ever be possessed, apart from Him.

In closing, let us consider Jesus Christ, God's Son, as the ultimate example of One, Whom the Spirit of the Lord filled with God's own full measure of wisdom, counsel, might, and understanding. (Isa. 11:2) *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 11:2) *And the Spirit of the Lord—*... There can be no doubt that reference is here [made] to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the sacred Trinity, as descending upon him in the fullness of his influences, and producing in him perfect wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. The Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him—a Spirit producing wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, etc. All these are lit the Scriptures traced to the agency of the Holy Spirit; see 1 Corinthians 12:8–11.¹⁹ ... That he [Jesus] was thus under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is abundantly taught in the New

15 Matt. 10:20 *For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

16 Isa. 6:7 *And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*

17 Isa. 51:16 *And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.*

18 1 Cor. 12:8 *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

19 1 Cor. 12:8–11 *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: ¹¹But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

Testament. Thus, in Matthew 3:16,²⁰ the Holy Spirit is represented as descending on him at his baptism. In John 3:34, it is said, 'For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;' compare Colossians 1:19.²¹

Shall rest upon him—That is, shall descend on him, and remain with him. It shall not merely come upon him, but shall attend him permanently; compare Numbers 11:25–26.²²

The spirit of wisdom—The spirit producing wisdom, or making him wise. Wisdom consists in the choice of the best means to secure the best ends. This attribute is often given to the Messiah in the New Testament, and was always evinced by him; compare 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 2:3²³: 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'

And understanding—The difference between the words here rendered wisdom and understanding is, that the former denotes wisdom properly; and the latter, that judgment resulting from wisdom, by which we distinguish things, or decide on their character.

The spirit of counsel—That by which he shall be qualified to "give" counsel or advice; the qualification of a public instructor and guide; see the note at Isaiah 9:6.²⁴

And might—Strength, vigor, energy; that strength of heart and purpose which will enable a man to meet difficulties, to encounter dangers, to be bold, open, and fearless in the discharge of his duties. It is not necessary to remark, that this characteristic was found in an eminent degree in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of knowledge—That is, the knowledge of the attributes and plans of Yahweh; compare Matthew 11:27²⁵: 'Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son.' John 1:18²⁶: 'No man hath seen God at I any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;' 1 John 5:20.²⁷

And of the fear of the Lord—The fear of Yahweh is often used to denote piety in general, as consisting in a reverence for the divine commands, and a dread of offending him; "that is," a desire to please him, which is piety; compare Job 28:28; Psalm 19:9; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 3:13; Proverbs 15:33; Proverbs 19:23.²⁸ That this characteristic was found eminently in the Lord

20 Matt. 3:16 *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*

21 Col. 1:19 *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*

22 Num. 11:25-26 *And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. ²⁶But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp.*

23 1 Cor. 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

Eph. 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

Col. 2:3 *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

24 Isa. 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

25 Matt. 11:27 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

26 John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

27 1 John 5:20 *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

28 Job 28:28 *And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

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Jesus, it is not necessary to attempt to prove.
(END QUOTE)

The last of Asaph's thoughts are revealed when he states that instead of relying on his own reasoning, thinking, and understanding as he had previously done, and consequently foolishly envying the wicked, now he views the Lord as the strength of his life, and to the Lord he will draw near, and in the Lord, he shall place his trust. Ultimately it was God Who provided Asaph his spiritual discernment and prevented his apostasy, and because of this, Asaph vowed to fully trust the Lord and His counsel. Asaph's journey of faith provides for us a wonderful example, of one coming to understand the Lord's will in his life, and ultimately experiencing the great deliverance it produces.

Psalm 73:23–28 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

²⁴ *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

²⁵ *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*

²⁶ *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

²⁷ *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*

²⁸ *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.*

Ps. 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

Ps. 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

Prov. 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Prov. 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

Prov. 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

Prov. 19:23 The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Endnote

i Acts 6:8–7:58 *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*
 9 *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.*
 10 *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*
 11 *Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*
 12 *And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,*
 13 *And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:*
 14 *For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*
 15 *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*
 7 *Then said the high priest, Are these things so?*
 2 *And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,*
 3 *And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.*
 4 *Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.*
 5 *And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.*
 6 *And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.*
 7 *And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.*
 8 *And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.*
 9 *And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,*
 10 *And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.*
 11 *Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.*

12 *But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.*
 13 *And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.*
 14 *Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.*
 15 *So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,*
 16 *And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.*
 17 *But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,*
 18 *And another king arose, which knew not Joseph.*
 19 *The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.*
 20 *In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:*
 21 *And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.*
 22 *And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*
 23 *And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.*
 24 *And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:*
 25 *For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.*
 26 *And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?*
 27 *But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?*
 28 *Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?*
 29 *Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.*
 30 *And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.*
 31 *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,*
 32 *Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.*
 33 *Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.*
 34 *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.*

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35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses,

that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But Solomon built him an house.

48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.