

Words of the Wise – God Rules

Introduction

Our spiritual vision sometimes gets blurred. God has to refocus us. In our thinking and actions we start to go off on a tangent. God brings us back to the straight line. We may begin to limit our view to this earth and what we see. Then we must look up and remember that He rules. We need to look into the Scriptures and remember the lessons there from ages past but yet so applicable to right now.

Sad to say there are those times when believers ask 'How long Lord?' We wonder how long it will be until this suffering will end, this persecution will stop, this wickedness ceases. In weakness we ask God 'When will you show Yourself to be God?' All we need do is look into the Word and see how He has been and how He promises that He does not change and will do as He has always done. And let us look within to see what He has done.

In this study we look to the words of the wise in Proverbs. These collected sayings were to be words to live by. Their inclusion in the book is even evidence that they were being used, and therefore could be used in any age. They are practical for us in our distress. They are also practically short and easy to remember to be called to mind when we are bothered and frustrated because we don't see God doing something. Of course He is at work even as we sleep. He never grows tired or fails to note what is happening for He is God, not man. God rules.

God Rules from the Beginning

3:19-20 "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens; by His knowledge the deeps broke forth, and the clouds drop down the dew."

Just think how in six normal 24 hour days God created everything by His almighty Word. This is the fantastic starting point to remembering that He rules. The God who put the constellations in the heavens and filled the oceans with creatures is not a God who then departs for some other region not to be involved. True enough His laws of nature are set in place, yet it is by His Word that He upholds all this vast creation. "...upholding the universe by His word of power." Heb. 1:3 He can suspend His laws as in the case of Joshua and the battle against the Amorites. Josh. 10:12-14 By suspending the laws of nature and extending the daylight it shows that He intervenes in the affairs of this created world and in His people's interests, "for the Lord fought for Israel."

3:33 "The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the abode of the righteous."

This is brief and to the point and to be recollected when we might start to doubt that things are going right. This is a principle that is echoed again in 10:29 "The Lord is a stronghold to him whose way is upright, but destruction to evildoers." It is said a little differently and reminds us that God repeats this over and over again in His inspired Word in various ways to remind us that no matter what the situation God rules with His principles, which are unalterable from the beginning.

God Rules All for He Sees All

5:21 "For man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he watches all his paths."

It is not just the wicked or the believers, but all that He sees, "man's ways." Here we have the omniscience of God, this quality of God that so far exceeds man's as the continuous light of the sun exceeds the short-lived tiny light of a match that is struck and soon burns out. This quality of God is

like the earth in its wide girth and immense size compared to a fly speck that is like man's knowledge and what he sees. Our Lord Jesus told us that the very hairs upon our head are numbered. He knows us so well. And a worthless sparrow can fall to the earth and God knows it, how much more then does He take note of us. Since He cares for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, so for us who were made in His image there is so much more loving care.

Because He sees all, He rules all. Think of Elijah on Mt. Carmel mocking Baal. 1 Kings 18 Our God does not sleep and need to be awakened. Our God does not go somewhere where He does not know and rule. Our God is not limited in His knowledge that He goes somewhere and is not aware of what is going on in the place from which He departed. Our living Lord is not distracted by something and fails to take note of what is going on. He does not miss anything. When the fire from heaven fell on Elijah's altar, all was consumed: the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, the water in the trench. So our God sees and thus rules all.

God Rules even Governments and Rulers who are Unbelievers

8:15-16 "By Me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by Me princes rule, and nobles govern the earth."

Some might say well this goes without saying since He sees all. It still needs saying and illustrating because we in our weakness start to drift from the clarity we need when focused on Him and His Word. We see the wicked rulers of this world doing what we do not understand. God is still in charge and His will will be done. Our Lord is not just the King over His people, but over the nations. "Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations? For this is Thy due; for among all the wise ones of the nations and in their kingdoms there is none like Thee." Jer. 10:7 The term 'nations' is one that refers to all those not of God's people Israel.

Our Lord rules over the governments of this world. "Many seek the favor of a ruler, but from the Lord a man gets justice." 29:27 Paul tells us, "For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God...he is God's servant...he is the servant of God to execute His wrath on the wrongdoer." Rom. 13:1-7 During the Reformation God gave back to His people much that they had been deprived of under the Antichrist. One of these things was the proper concept of the two Swords:

- Heb. 4:12 the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God by which He rules His church,
- Rom. 13:4 government bears not "the sword in vain; he is the servant of God..." Power by which He rules the world.

Peter likewise tells of this:

- the Word of God gives life, it "is the living and abiding Word of God." 1 Pet. 1:23,
- governments in turn are "to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right" 1 Pet. 2:13-17 these being sent by Him.

To illustrate that God is in charge of all governments think of Daniel's ministry under the four rulers: Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Belshazzar and Cyrus.

- Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that Daniel's God was the "God of gods and Lord of kings." Dan. 2:47 "King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has wrought toward me. How great are His signs, how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation." Dan. 4:2-3 It is too bad that Nebuchadnezzar had to learn this the hard way with reduction to a

a beast of the field. God rules.” All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing; and he does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand.” Dan. 4:35

- King Darius also proclaimed to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell on earth, “...He is the living God, enduring for ever; His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and His dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues, He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth...” Dan. 6:26-27
- Belshazzar learned that God ruled by the hand writing on the wall and its fulfillment in the kingdom taken from him that very night.
- Cyrus God used to send His people back to the promised land from their 70 year exile. Isaiah prophesied long before Cyrus was born, 150 years before the decree. Is. 44:28,45:1 What a sign over time that God rules and knows what He is doing with the earthly rulers then and now.

Or think of the nation of Assyria with its great capital of Nineveh. Jonah was sent there to warn them of God's impending judgment because God had seen their great wickedness. Then since all across Nineveh they repented, judgment was withheld. But we also read the message of Nahum of judgment on Nineveh which was given 150 years later. The repentance had disappeared. God knew. God rules. God acted.

God Sees into the Hearts of Men and Rules Accordingly

15:3,11 “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” “Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the Lord, how much more the hearts of men!”

Beyond this earth in the place of death and torment that He sees and knows. If He has oversight there, how simple it is for the Almighty to look into man's heart and act accordingly. We can only look on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. Saul appeared to be every inch the king, but turned out very badly. David, the shepherd boy, did not look like a king but became the apple of God's eye. We can only go by what we see man do in our short sight and hear man say within our hearing. God sees and knows all, even the depths of a man's heart and based on this He rules.

God being in charge is a decided comfort to us. He protects and turns evil into good for us. He gives comfort when we need it for God knows. No need of ours escapes His notice. The living God is the God who is love. His actions are taken when and how they should be. It is a knife that cuts both ways though. He also sees our heart's depth of sin. “And before Him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” Heb. 4:13 Since He knows our evil thoughts, open confession to Him of our sin is the only wise route. There can be no hidden sin and in this is ultimate comfort...”...but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more...” Rom. 3:20 What a joy to behold Him ruling. “The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears toward the city...The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” Ps. 34:15,17

God Rules Everywhere

15:3 ...”in every place...”

How foolish were the soldiers of Benhadad the Syrian king, “...their gods are gods of the hills, and so they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.” 1 Kings 20:23 Our God rules in every place. The disastrous defeat of the Syrians was testimony to that. When God's own people in Judah thought they could sin and He would not see and

act, they were sorely mistaken. “Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? Says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? Says the Lord.” Jer. 23:23-24 No crevice in the hills or cave, no nook or cranny, no pit or underbrush can conceal from the Lord.

God Rules in the Interest of His Will and His People

16:3-4 “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.” It is so important to hear that cry down through the years, Who is on the Lord's side? And to respond with faith is the answer. Even the lowliest God rules over with His love, “The Lord tears down the house of the proud, but maintains the widow's boundaries.” 15:25 Even though it may seem as if times without number we are put down, persecuted, facing dangers and tribulations in untold number, He rules. “For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.” 24:16

Remember the personal testimony of David, “The steps of a man are from the Lord, and He establishes him in whose way He delights; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord is the stay of his hand.” Ps. 37:23-24 And we can never forget Paul's personal testimony that reminds us it may seem as if he is not ruling, but in the end we see He is. He has His purposes for everything. His will will be done. “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...” 2 Cor 4:8-10 We carry in our body the death of Jesus. His suffering we take part in and our faith is strengthened.

Is there such a thing as 'luck' for us? What do you think? In what areas?

God's people are the focus of the story of salvation in the Old Testament time as the time came ever nearer for the Messiah to be born from woman from that specific line of men. And so He preserved this particular race from Adam, Noah, Abraham, Judah, and those in between and until the fullness of the time had come for Him to be born.

The nations round about who had to do with God's people then are mentioned in the Scriptures. We have nothing on China, India and the North American Indians because these were not integrally involved with God's people. Yet of course the Word is clear that God ruled over all. Now we know that all have sinned and fallen short of the grace of God. Further we know that salvation is for all, for God would have all men to be saved. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, we see repeatedly that God is the ruler over all mankind and would have all to be saved, though so many reject Him. But the words are there about every “nation, tribe, people, tongue” in Rev. 5:9, 7:9, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6. As God rules all the world, so He desires repentance from all and that none should be lost.

God Rules, Trumps, Overrules, Redirects Man

21:2 “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart.” God's purpose, intent, will, design; all of this will be done. The Lord searches the mind and tries the heart to give to every man accordingly. And He does not make mistakes. He knows what he is doing, contrary to man who so often fools himself into thinking what is not true. The Lord is true and His Word guides us into all truth.

21:31 “A horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord.” What is the most intense and confused action of man? War. Yet even in all of this chaos God carries out His purposes.

16:1,9 "The plans of the mind belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord." "A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Man can plan all he wants but God rules and brings forth what He wants. Each of us can speak of those times when we had planned and planned, but things went differently and thankfully so. And think of those times when you know you were not in control and were really carried along to a far better conclusion than we could have arrived at.

19:21 "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established." This is great comfort to us when we consider that our God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. We would not want anyone else to rule over us, least of all our own self or any grouping of the wisest men of this world, for still they would be tainted by sin and not do right by us. Far, far better it is, the Lord who rules:

- The Lord who sanctifies – Ex. 31:12-13, Heb. 13:12,
- The Lord who heals – Ex. 15:25-27, 1 Pet. 2:24,
- The Lord who is my Shepherd – Ps. 23:1, Jn. 10:11,
- The Lord of hosts – 1 Sam. 1:3, Rev. 19:13-16,
- The Lord our peace – Num. 6:26, Jn. 14:27,
- The Lord who is there and here – Ez. 48:35, Mt. 28:20,
- The Lord who is our righteousness – Jer. 23:6, 2 Cor. 5:21. To Him alone belongs the glory.