

Come to the Water (Wasa Hall... 15) Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, so be it now and forever. Amen.

Once again, today, let's listen in prayer to the Word of God, in the O.T. Bk of Proverbs. The second chapter of the book, part of the long Prologue before we get to the first collection of the Proverbs of King Solomon that begins with ch. 10, ch 2 is a poem, on its own, about Wisdom and the ~~advantages~~ ^{advantages} of Wisdom. First, the conditions for the attainment of wisdom: docility, reflection, desire and industry: "My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and reaching your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver, and search for it as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." ||| The next 4 sections of the poem list the advantages of wisdom: intimacy with God, and his protection: in the possession of wisdom are moral virtue and practical prudence: wisdom gives protection from the allurements of evil companions (a point already indicated in the 1st chapter); and the 4th advantage of wisdom is deliverance from the adulterous woman, the 'strange' or 'foreign' woman, ^{a figure that appears elsewhere too in ancient wisdom literature} — the warning of this section of the poem is developed in a parallel and story-form later in the Prologue: and finally, the poem of ch. 2 ends with a general conclusion, about the peace and security in the promised land that were the ideal offered in Israel's earlier history, but now being gradually spiritualised, in preparation for the gospel: "blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." Note that it is God alone who gives wisdom, and that guidance and protection are consequences of intimate friendship with God. The indivell

of wisdom, too, should remind Chalkias of the promise of Christ: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." The theme of indivell wisdom comes back again in a couple of passages just a little later on in the book. But to complete the poem of ch. 2 first: "for the Lord bestows wisdom and teaches knowledge and understanding. Out of his store he endows the upright with ability, as a shield for those who live blameless lives; for he guards the course of justice and keeps watch over the way of his loyal servants." Then you will understand what is right and just, and keep only to the good man's path; for wisdom will sink into your mind, and knowledge will be your heart's delight. Prudence will keep watch over you, understanding will guard you || It will save you from evil ways and from men whose talk is subversive, who forsake the honest course to walk in ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and exult in evil and subversive acts, whose own ways are crooked, whose tracks are devious. || It will save you from the adulteress, from the loose woman with her seductive words, who forsakes the teaching of her childhood and her forgotten the covenant of her God: for her path runs downhill towards death, and her course is set for the land of the dead. No one who resorts to her finds his way back or regains the path to life. || See then that you follow the footsteps of good men and keep to the course of the righteous: for the upright shall dwell on earth and blameless men remain there; but the wicked shall be uprooted from it and traitors weeded out"

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— The Bk of Proverbs. Now, in course, "Soy. Soy. Athelens"

MUSIC - PRAYERS

Sorry ^{on} and expanding further on the blessings of wisdom, on intimacy with God and His protection ^{on the intelligibility of wisdom,} here again from the Bk of Proverbs: "My son, do not forget my teaching, but guard my commands in your heart; for long life and years in plenty will they bring you, and prosperity as well. Let your good faith and loyalty never fail, but bind them about your neck. Thus will you win favour and success in the sight of God and man. Put all your trust in the Lord and do not rely on your own understanding. Think of him in all your ways, and he will smooth your path. Do not think how wise you are, but fear the Lord and turn from evil. Let that be the medicine to keep you in health, the liniment for your limbs. Honour the Lord with your wealth as the first charge on all your earnings; then your granaries will be filled with corn and your vats bursting with new wine. My son, do not spurn the Lord's correction or take offense at his reproof; for those whom he loves the Lord reproves, and he punishes a favourite son. || Happy he who has found wisdom, and the man who has acquired understanding; for wisdom is more profitable than silver, and the gain she brings is better than gold. She is more precious than red coral, and all your jewels are no match for her. Long life is in her right hand, and in her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths lead to prosperity. She is a staff of life to all who grasp her, and those who hold her fast are safe.