

THE NATURE OF GOD

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." (15:3)

INTRODUCTION—Even though the book of Proverbs is full of wisdom for living, much is also said about God who is the source of wisdom. It is the knowledge of God, and the fear and respect which such knowledge produces, that produces wisdom in man (1:7; 9:10).

Perhaps the revelation of God's nature, found in the book of Proverbs, helps motivate wise living better than anything else (15:3; 21:30). God is far above and beyond man (30:2-6). Only the spiritual fool could learn these things about God and then refuse to serve Him.

I. THE NATURE OF GOD

- A. Creator (16:4). God proved the value and power of wisdom, by using it in the process of creating the world (3:19-20; 8:12,22-36), and man (22:2; 20:12).
- B. Wise (19:21; 21:30). It is arrogance to think that man's wisdom can even compete with God's (cf. 30:2-4). We are wise to listen to the inspired wisdom of Proverbs.
- C. Providential (16:1,9,33; 21:1). The 'casting of lots' was not gambling or superstition, rather it was a way to have God, who can control the lot, express His will in the matter (cf. Joshua 18:10; Acts 1:26).

II. THE NATURE OF GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MEN

- A. Knows Men (15:3,11). Man's life and heart is an open book before the Lord.
- B. Demands Righteousness and Heartfelt Service (21:3; 15:8-9). Being able to know man's life and heart, God demands purity and the proper spirit (28:9).
- C. Hates Wickedness in Men (11:20; 15:9). He hates all forms of evil in men. They are an abomination to Him (cf. 6:16-19; 8:7; 11:1; 12:22; 15:8,26; 16:5; 17:15; 20:10; 21:27; 28:9).
- D. Judges Men (16:2; 21:2). To 'weigh the spirit' would be to determine the amount of truth and righteousness within it—which decides its value and worth.
 - 1. Tests and Tries the Heart (17:3). Man is given the opportunity to mature, develop character, and purify his life.
 - 2. Passes Judgment on Men's Lives (11:31; 24:12).
 - a. Rewards the Righteous (3:1-2; 10:22,27; 16:7).
 - b. Punishes the Wicked (10:27-29).
- E. Preserves the Needy and the Faithful (15:25; 23:10-11; 22:22-23). God takes it as a personal attack against Him, when the needy and poor are oppressed.
 - 1. *"God is referred to in Proverbs 23:10-11 as 'Redeemer' (Hebrew--goel), originally the next of kin who avenges the estate of the dead kinsman, or who raises up posterity for him (cf. Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Ruth 2:20; 3:9; 4:4-6; Leviticus 25:25; Numbers 5:8). The redeemer was also the kinsman who came to the rescue of one who had fallen into slavery or oppressions (cf. Leviticus 25:48; Proverbs 23:10-11). Here, the thought seems to be that as destitute as the poor, the orphans, and the widows might be, there is one who claims them as next of kin and will defend them, that individual being the Lord God."* (Thomas L. Seals, *Proverbs—Wisdom For All Ages*, p.63)

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2. Guides and Protects His People (2:7-8; 3:6,23-24; 10:3,30; 11:8; 12:21; 14:26; 20:22; 21:31; 24:16).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Knowing that God sees and knows all we do, should that knowledge make us afraid? Or comforted? Or both?*
- 2) *In what ways can knowing God—the way He is depicted in Proverbs—motivate us to live wisely (1:7; 9:10)?*
- 3) *If wisdom empowered God to create the world (8:22-31), what can it do for us (8:32-36)?*
- 4) *List some of the forms of wickedness which the wise man says are an “abomination” to the Lord.*
- 5) *Why does the Lord test our hearts before passing judgment?*
- 6) *How can it be possible that by living righteously our enemies can become our friends (16:7)?*
- 7) *Why is God so concerned about the treatment of the poor and down-trodden (23:10-11; 22:22-23)?*
- 8) *How is God able to keep the righteous from stumbling and falling (2:7-8; 3:23-24)?*
- 9) *Besides trusting in God, what must **we** do for God to deliver us (21:31)?*