

Dr. August Konkel, Proverbs, Session 9, Wisdom for the World, Proverbs 8 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Konkel, Proverbs, Session 9, Wisdom for the World, Proverbs 8, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This excerpt from Dr. August Konkel's lecture series on Proverbs focuses on Proverbs chapter 8, exploring the personification of Wisdom. **Konkel analyzes Wisdom's public appeal, emphasizing its benefits to society and individuals.** He discusses the historical significance of this chapter in early Christian theology, particularly regarding the nature of Jesus Christ. **The lecture further examines the relationship between Wisdom and God, clarifying that while Wisdom is a companion and creation of God, she is distinct from God.** Finally, Konkel interprets the concept of Wisdom as instrumental in God's creative act, paralleling humanity's acquisition of wisdom for life.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Konkel, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms & Wisdom → Proverbs).



Konkel_Prov_Session09.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Konkel, Proverbs, Session 9, Wisdom for the World, Proverbs 8

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. August Konkel's lecture on Proverbs 8:

Briefing Document: Dr. August Konkel on Proverbs 8

Introduction:

Dr. Konkel's lecture focuses on Proverbs 8, a pivotal chapter exploring the concept of wisdom, its public appeal, its function in society, its role in creation, and its call to humanity. He highlights the chapter's significance in Christian doctrine, particularly in the historical debates surrounding the nature of Christ. He emphasizes that while the chapter was used in these debates, its primary concern is a discourse on wisdom itself.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Wisdom's Public Appeal:

- Wisdom is personified and depicted as actively calling out to all people, not just those within a covenant relationship. Konkel notes this is similar to the appeal in Psalm 49.
- *"Does not wisdom call to you? Does not understanding raise her voice? She's at the peaks of the high places along the way...wisdom is out in the public...she's got a message for all people."*
- Wisdom is presented as readily available, located in public places, and offering words of truth without distortion.
- Wisdom is more valuable than material wealth:
- *"The worth of wisdom is more than silver. She is to be chosen over the finest of gold. She is better than pearls."*

1. **Wisdom's Function in Society:**

- Wisdom provides insight into complex situations, offering prudence and the ability to resolve difficulties, specifically in regards to ruling.
- *"She's got cunning, she's got prudence, but in the best and most positive senses to lead to a good end, to resolve situations."*
- Konkil connects this to the story of Solomon, highlighting how wisdom is essential for justice and good governance.
- Wisdom is a means of success and is characterized by ethical conduct, intellectual understanding and material abundance, "Honorable wealth, is wealth gained through honest means."
- *"It is righteousness that leads to us becoming prosperous. But wisdom really is much more valuable than wealth. And again, her fruits are ethical conduct, intellectual understanding, and material abundance."*

1. **Wisdom and Creation:**

- Wisdom is presented as intimately involved in the creation process, being present with God from the beginning.
- It is a point of discussion whether wisdom is to be identified with God, and Konkil asserts that wisdom is not to be identified with God but is rather God's companion in the establishment of order in creation.
- *"But it must be affirmed that in this chapter and in these verses, wisdom is not to be identified with God. But rather, wisdom is the companion of God. And that wisdom is the companion who is a part of the establishment of the order in creation."*
- Konkil notes there's an analogy: God acquires wisdom for his creation, and humans acquire wisdom for their lives.
- He explains that the creation narrative describes the movement from chaos to order through God's will and work, with wisdom playing a vital role.
- Wisdom is described as God's "child" using the Hebrew word "amon", and a discussion of alternative translations is discussed with the conclusion that it refers to wisdom as God's child.

- *"And so, wisdom is God's delight. She is his child and she is the means by which God creates all things."*

1. **Wisdom's Call and the Blessed Life:**

- Wisdom concludes her speech with an appeal: those who follow wisdom are blessed.
- Those who seek wisdom are approved by God, and those who wait at her door are blessed.
- *"Blessed are those who observe her ways. They are the ones whom God approves. They are the ones who are the kind of person, the character that God delights in. Blessed are those who wait at the door of wisdom."*
- Wisdom is presented as a choice between life and death, urging all to embrace wisdom to find blessing.

1. **Historical and Theological Context:**

- Dr. Konkel highlights the use of Proverbs 8 in the Arian controversy. The Arians used the text "The Lord acquired me as the first of his ways" to argue that Jesus (equated with wisdom) had a beginning, unlike God.
- Konkel explains Athanasius argued that this view conflicts with the New Testament texts which equate Jesus with the Yahweh of the Old Testament, thus making Jesus equal to God, but he notes that this was not the primary intention of the chapter.
- *"According to Athanasius, in the book of John and in the New Testament, the person of Jesus, the Lord, is equated with the Yahweh of the Old Testament... So, there's just no question in John's mind that Yahweh and Jesus are the same."*
- He notes the chapter's true aim is a discourse on wisdom, not to prove the nature of Christ.
- *"Well, that really wasn't the main concern of this chapter. The concern of this chapter is a discourse on wisdom."*

Conclusion:

Proverbs 8 presents wisdom as a powerful and vital force, not just for the individual but for the very fabric of creation and society. Dr. Konkel emphasizes wisdom's accessibility, its connection to ethical conduct, and its role as God's companion in bringing order to the world. He concludes that choosing wisdom is choosing life and blessing. The chapter also reveals the historical and theological importance of the concept of wisdom and provides an important lens through which to understand the relationship between humanity and the divine.

This briefing document should provide a good overview of the main points of Dr. Konkel's lecture.

4. Study Guide: Konkell, Proverbs, Session 9, Wisdom for the World, Proverbs 8

Proverbs 8: Wisdom for the World Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Konkell, what was the main point of contention in the debate about Proverbs 8 during the time of Nicaea?
2. How does Proverbs 8 portray the public nature of wisdom?
3. What is the relationship between wisdom and material wealth as described in Proverbs 8?
4. According to Konkell, is wisdom identified with God in Proverbs 8? Why or why not?
5. What does Konkell mean when he says wisdom is a "companion of God" in creation?
6. What is the significance of the word "amon" in Proverbs 8?
7. According to the text, how does wisdom relate to the order of creation?
8. What does the text suggest about the blessings that come to those who follow wisdom?
9. What does Konkell say about the connection between wisdom and justice?
10. How does the text connect wisdom to the concept of life and death?

Answer Key

1. The main point of contention was the origin of wisdom. Arians used Proverbs 8:22 to argue that wisdom (and therefore Jesus) was created and had a beginning, while others argued that wisdom is eternal, like God.
2. Proverbs 8 portrays wisdom as making her call in public places—at the crossroads, city gates, and along the way. This imagery demonstrates that wisdom is accessible to all, not just to a select few.

3. Wisdom is associated with wealth, but it is not just any wealth. The text describes "honorable wealth," gained through ethical means, demonstrating that wisdom is related to character.
4. According to Konkil, wisdom is not identified with God but is considered a companion of God. She is created by God and is part of the established order of creation, not God himself.
5. Konkil means that wisdom is a partner in God's creative acts. Wisdom is the means through which God creates and brings order to the world, and she is God's delight.
6. Amon is the word that's translated in some versions of the Bible as a "craftsman." It can also mean "child," and Konkil suggests that it is best understood as wisdom being God's child, the means through which the order of creation was brought about.
7. The text describes wisdom as being involved in the creation process. She is present as God brings order out of chaos, being a part of the sequence of moving from depths to land, skies, and seas.
8. Those who observe the ways of wisdom are blessed. They are the ones whom God approves and in whom God delights and these people have the possibility of experiencing a blessed life.
9. Konkil states that wisdom is the foundation for determining justice and the order of society. It provides the ability to deliberate, understand, and act with strength, which is necessary to administer justice.
10. Wisdom is presented as a choice between life and death. Choosing wisdom leads to blessings and is described as a pathway to life, whereas rejecting her ways will lead to death.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Develop a thesis statement and craft a well-organized essay using the source material and other supporting evidence to answer each of the questions below.

1. Explore the historical and theological context surrounding the interpretation of Proverbs 8, particularly focusing on the Arian controversy and how it shaped Christian doctrine.
2. Analyze the various ways in which Proverbs 8 portrays wisdom, discussing her public nature, her relationship to material wealth, and her connection to the process of creation.
3. Compare and contrast the concepts of wisdom as depicted in Proverbs 8 and the concept of logos in the Gospel of John, specifically examining the relationship of these concepts to God.
4. Discuss the implications of Proverbs 8 for the human pursuit of wisdom, including how wisdom is acquired and how it benefits individuals and society.
5. Critically evaluate the different interpretations of the word "amon," exploring the textual evidence and theological considerations that lead to the various conclusions.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Arianism:** A Christian heresy that denied the full divinity of Jesus, arguing that he was a created being subordinate to God the Father.
- **Athanasius:** A prominent 4th-century Church Father and theologian who strongly opposed Arianism, arguing for the full divinity of Jesus.
- **Nicaea:** Refers to the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, a gathering of Christian bishops that formulated the Nicene Creed, which declared that Jesus was of the same substance as God the Father.
- **Wisdom:** A concept central to Proverbs, referring to practical skill, understanding, and ethical insight, often personified as a woman and used by God as a tool for creation.
- **Amon:** A Hebrew word used in Proverbs 8, which can be interpreted as a child, craftsman, or something related to being faithful. The meaning of this word is disputed among biblical scholars and theologians.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible (often translated as "LORD" in English Bibles), often equated with Jesus by some Christian denominations.
- **Kavod:** A Hebrew word meaning "heavy" or "weighty," but can also imply "glory" or "honor." Konkel uses the word to refer to the troublesomeness or difficulty of a group of people, as in the story of Solomon.
- **Logos:** A Greek word that means "word," "reason," or "plan," used in the Gospel of John to describe Jesus as the divine Word of God that was with God in the beginning, and through whom all things came into being.
- **Honorable Wealth:** Wealth acquired through ethical and righteous means, implying that true prosperity is linked to moral integrity.

5. FAQs on Konkell, Proverbs, Session 9, Wisdom for the World, Proverbs 8, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Proverbs 8 Based on Dr. August Konkell's Lecture

1. **What is the main focus of Proverbs 8, and why is it significant within Christian doctrine?** Proverbs 8 is primarily a discourse on the nature and role of wisdom, particularly in relation to creation. It is significant because, in early Christian theology, it was used to discuss the person of Jesus Christ and his relationship to God. Specifically, passages were debated regarding the nature of wisdom as having been "acquired" by God, which was interpreted by some to imply Jesus had a beginning and was not co-equal with God. However, Dr. Konkell emphasizes that the main concern of the chapter is not the nature of Jesus but a description of wisdom itself.
2. **How is wisdom portrayed in the beginning of Proverbs 8?** Wisdom is personified as making a public call, as though it's calling out to people and inviting them to listen. She is shown as being available and accessible to everyone, not just a select few. Her call is described in public places like crossroads, city gates, and high places, demonstrating that wisdom is meant for all of humanity. Her words are true and she is more valuable than any material possession.
3. **What are the benefits of wisdom, according to Proverbs 8?** Wisdom offers insight into complex situations, cunning and prudence that lead to a good end, and the ability to resolve difficulties. It also leads to success, prosperity (specifically through honest means), and a proper understanding of justice. Wisdom helps one to understand and deliberate and is the basis for order in society. It brings ethical conduct, intellectual understanding, and material abundance.
4. **What does Proverbs 8 say about the relationship between wisdom and creation?** Wisdom is described as being at the heart of the order of creation and is referred to as the "first of God's works." Wisdom is portrayed as God's companion, a part of the establishment of order in creation. God acquires wisdom and creates through her, emphasizing wisdom's role as an agent of God's creative work. Although some have argued that wisdom is to be identified with Christ, this chapter says that Wisdom is created by God, a being with an origin, not unlike humans, who also acquire wisdom.

5. **What does the word 'amon' mean in Proverbs 8, and why is it significant?** The word "amon" is used to describe wisdom as being like God's child. Although other interpretations exist, suggesting a craftsman or scribe, Dr. Konkel suggests it most likely refers to the raising of a child, like Esther was to Mordecai. It is significant because it describes wisdom's intimate and cherished relationship with God and its role as an agent by which God brought order to creation. It highlights how God delights in wisdom.
6. **How does Proverbs 8 emphasize the importance of choosing wisdom?** The chapter concludes by stating that those who observe wisdom's ways are blessed and approved by God, emphasizing the necessity of choosing wisdom. Wisdom calls all of humanity and offers an opportunity to be among those whom God delights in. Wisdom is the path to life, and a life that is aligned with God's will. The alternative, without wisdom, is associated with a lack of blessing.
7. **How does Dr. Konkel interpret the relationship between God, wisdom, and Jesus?** Dr. Konkel emphasizes that in Proverbs 8, wisdom is not to be identified with God. It is described as God's companion and the first of God's works. Wisdom is created. While some have equated wisdom with Jesus in Christian doctrine, Dr. Konkel insists that the chapter describes the way that God works, in which he first acquires wisdom, and then creates the world through wisdom. Just as we acquire wisdom for life, so God acquired wisdom for the act of creation.
8. **What is the key takeaway regarding wisdom in Proverbs 8 for the audience?** The key takeaway is that wisdom is profoundly valuable, accessible to all people, and essential for a successful and righteous life. It is not merely intellectual knowledge but a deep understanding of how to live well in complex situations, bringing about material abundance, ethical conduct, and ultimately, God's blessing. Wisdom should be sought by everyone, as it is the path to becoming the kind of person God approves of and delights in.