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Day 136 – May 16

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## Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

### *Proverbs of Solomon*

Readings: *Proverbs 8:1-36; 9:1-6; 2:1-22; 3:13-24; 1:20-33; 4:1-27*

### ***Reflections:***

- Solomon’s wisdom represents some of the best insights in how to live when you don’t have Christ or the power of the Spirit at work within your life. As we will see there are two ways that are strongly contrasted, the way of wisdom and the way of foolishness. What is fascinating is that both wisdom and folly are personified as women. It is no surprise that Solomon also includes his reflections on the adulteress and the wife of noble character. These two human expressions are symbolic of folly and wisdom.
- In these first readings we also see that wisdom is very closely associated with the word of God as it relates to creation. John 1:1 and following explains how Jesus was the word of God right from the beginning of creation. Here we see that the wisdom of God is one and the same as the word of God. Does this mean that in the divine essence, both male and female as identified in Genesis 1, that the word/wisdom of God is both male and female? What we can know is that God has no problems with affirming the divine nature as equally male and female.
- This section concludes with a warning: “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” As we will see Solomon will outline many insights into how to live for God. The challenge with the human heart though is that even a perfectly guarded heart does not ultimately rescue it from its own corruption. Only being changed from the inside out with a new heart will ultimately free a person from the broken condition of perpetual self-centeredness. What is fascinating is that at this time of history, all of the emphasis is on doing everything possible to manage your exterior world and what you do so as to keep sin far from you. Yet none of this works ultimately in the end, even for Solomon. Once Christ comes and opens the way for our hearts to be changed from the inside out, there is no longer the same emphasis on keeping away from all of these possible temptations. In fact, Jesus himself seems to live in a way completely contrary to the teachings of Solomon as he himself is described this way: “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.”’ But

wisdom is proved right by all her children.” (Luke 7:34-35). Jesus introduces to us a higher wisdom. A wisdom that is based on God working within our hearts to change us. It is a wisdom founded and grounded in grace that allows us to no longer try to perfectly purify our environment but now allows us to be agents of grace and truth as we enter into human brokenness already made right in our hearts before God through his grace.