

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's nature. To gain wisdom from God, a person is going to need a humble attitude. Our sinful nature competes with God. That's why fear and respect for God is so important (1:7). The revelation of God's nature produces wisdom in people who have a good understanding of human nature. God is love, is generous and wants to give us wisdom (2:6; 4:11), but it takes a humble and respectful attitude towards God to make that connection really productive.

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. 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: “gō’ēl”), 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).

The Lord refers to himself as the God of redemption: *“This is what the LORD says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.”* Isaiah 44:6, NIV

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)? Why?