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**WALKING THE WAY  
OF THE WISE**

A Biblical Theology of Wisdom

**MITCHELL L. CHASE**



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## Chapter One

# THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF GENESIS contain foundational and consequential events. We encounter the truth that God is the Creator, who used nothing to create everything. He is the one who speaks light, parts water, fills land, and declares things “good.” We read of an ordered world. Evening and morning are followed by another evening and morning, and so on to this very day.

As the story progresses, the biblical author tells of a plot to undermine God’s good design, to bring havoc into his good world. Lies echo in sacred space, and image bearers choose folly instead of wisdom.

### **ORDER IN THE WORLD**

In Genesis 1:26, God says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God made humans male and female (Gen 1:27), and he blessed them with the instruction, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over



the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen 1:28).

The language in Genesis 1:28 echoes Genesis 1:26, which means that part of being an image bearer is representing God’s rule in the world. It is the task of exercising dominion, of subduing creation. Like an ancient Near Eastern king might install his royal image in a land to claim it for his name and realm, God has placed his royal images in the world he has made.<sup>1</sup> Placing image bearers in his world is a signal of his divine ownership, and at the same time, being an image bearer involves subduing the world owned by God.

God’s creation in Genesis 1, and his task to his image bearers in Genesis 1:28, brims with order and design. As Proverbs 3:19-20 says, “The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.” He makes light and separates it from darkness (Gen 1:4). He separates waters (Gen 1:9). He brings forth land (Gen 1:9-10) from the waters, and on it he forms plants and fruit trees (Gen 1:11-12). A rhythm of “evening and morning” moves from one day to the next.

The Lord causes living creatures to fill the waters and the skies (Gen 1:20). He commands the living creatures, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth” (Gen 1:22). This language in Genesis 1:22 echoes in the commission to image bearers in Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 1:28. But there is a crucial difference. While the animals will procreate, they will not have dominion over God’s image bearers. Only humankind exists in the image of God, and only God’s image bearers will subdue the created order. Desmond Alexander is right: “Through commissioning human beings to govern all land animals, birds and fish, God sets them apart from all other creatures and gives them a royal status.”<sup>2</sup>

Reflecting on the events and movement throughout Genesis 1, we notice order and design. We see human beings as the climax of God’s creative work,

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<sup>1</sup>See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 220-38.

<sup>2</sup>T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2008), 76. He says, “The concept of royalty underlies the expression ‘image of God.’ In the ancient Near East, in both Egypt and Mesopotamia, the phrase ‘image of God’ was commonly linked to kings. The king was the living ‘image of a god’” (76).

and we read of these image bearers receiving the commission to exercise dominion and to subdue creatures and creation. Since God is the author of creation and the supreme authority in the world, whatever he says is good. His commands direct his image bearers in what is good. The goodness of divine commands derives from the goodness of divine character.

How does wisdom factor into all this? Submission to our sovereign and good Creator is good and thus wise. If God has ordered the world in a certain way, and if he has given commands that direct the hearts and lives of his image bearers in a certain way, then defying God's design is foolishness. Wisdom would involve living according to God's design and commands, and foolishness would involve living contrary to them.

## A FORBIDDEN TREE

When God makes his image bearers, he makes Adam first. He places the man in the garden (Gen 2:8), and in the midst of this garden are two trees. Plenty of trees were pleasing to the sight and good for food, but two trees are distinct: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Lord puts Adam in the garden to *work* it and *keep* it (Gen 2:15)—a pair of verbs that, when occurring together later in the Pentateuch, connect to priestly activity (Num 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6).<sup>3</sup> More than a farmer, Adam is a priest in Eden. He is to work (or serve) the sacred space and keep (or guard) the vicinity.

A prohibition informs Adam about the trees in the garden. The Lord says, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:16-17). One tree is off limits. And the prohibition comes with a consequence, a promise of something Adam does not have experience with: death.

The very name of the forbidden tree—“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”—invokes terms we associate with wisdom. The wise discern between good and evil. Would image bearers not be helped by knowing good and evil so that they could love the former and abhor the latter?

<sup>3</sup>See G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 66-70.

While the prohibition is a serious command, we would be overreading it if we were to conclude that the tree itself was bad or evil. God did not place an evil tree next to a good tree (“the tree of life”) in the garden. Instead, *everything* God made was good. Perhaps the prohibition would only persist for a period of growth and testing, where God’s image bearers would learn to trust the Lord and demonstrate obedience. Perhaps God would have eventually permitted his people to eat from this tree that had been for a time forbidden by him. If some kind of probationary period was in view, then trusting the Lord’s prohibition would involve growth in wisdom, and this growth would lead to eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil at the appointed time. Even if such eating was possible at a later and divinely revealed time, the label of the tree might designate it as a judgment tree. “In this respect,” says G. K. Beale, “the tree in Eden seems to have functioned as a judgment tree, the place where Adam should have gone to ‘discern between good and evil’ and, thus, where he should have judged the serpent as evil and pronounced judgment on it, as it entered the garden.”<sup>4</sup>

In fact, let’s talk about that serpent.

## DISORDER IN THE GARDEN

Near the end of Genesis 2, the Lord makes the woman and brings her to the man (Gen 2:20-23). As male and female, they would fulfill the commission to be fruitful and multiply, and they would subdue God’s creatures and creation because they—and not the animals in the sky or land or waters—existed as image bearers.

It is clear in the exchange between the woman and the serpent in Genesis 3 that she is already aware of the forbidden tree as well as the consequence if someone eats from it. Either the Lord told her directly or Adam told her directly, but the biblical narrative does not report how or when she knew.

At the beginning of Genesis 3, we read of a serpent in the garden of God. Here is a creeping thing, the likes of which we have read about in Genesis 1:25 (“everything that creeps on the ground”). Here, then, is a thing to subdue. So we wait to see whether an exercise of dominion is in store. But before

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<sup>4</sup>G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 35.

that outcome is clear, we read a description: “the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field” (Gen 3:1). The language of craftiness is about shrewdness, and shrewdness is related to the concept of wisdom. Clearly the serpent is not wise in a God-honoring sense. But the serpent is clever and knows how to use words. The serpent manipulates, deceives, and tempts.

The serpent engages the woman with a question: “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” (Gen 3:1). If we recall the specifics of God’s prohibition from Genesis 2:16-17, we realize that the serpent is distorting what God said. The serpent is portraying God as someone who created all these trees and who then denied them to his people. The serpent is telling a lie that distorts God’s character and intent.

She corrects the serpent and says, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die’” (Gen 3:2-3). The language of “touch” is not in the original command (Gen 2:16-17), so some interpreters have concluded that she has wrongfully added to God’s words. Others suspect that she says “touch” because touching the fruit would be necessary in order to eat it, and thus her words would be reasonable and not necessarily a distortion of God’s command. Perhaps significant in this discussion is that neither in Genesis 3, nor in any later biblical passage, is there an indictment against the woman for what she says in Genesis 3:2-3 to the serpent.

What should stand out for the reader is the serpent’s response in Genesis 3:4-5: “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” The creature is explicitly rejecting the warning God gave. The woman mentioned the threat of death (Gen 3:3), but the serpent says, “You will not surely die.”

A stunning exchange is taking place in the sacred space of Eden’s garden. A serpent is casting doubt on divine words. And while he is not exactly telling the woman to eat from the forbidden tree, he is portraying the divine command as impotent and the God who gave the command as withholding something important (“God knows . . . you will be like God,” Gen 3:5).

The serpent has distorted God's words (Gen 3:1), questioned the seriousness of God's warning (Gen 3:4), and framed God's motive as stingy and selfish (Gen 3:5). When the woman reflects on the tree, she sees that the tree is good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desirable "to make one wise" (Gen 3:6). This last description—"to make one wise"—is the narrator's confirmation of what the "knowledge of good and evil" would bring. It would bring wisdom, because biblical wisdom distinguishes between what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil.

But if God has forbidden the tree, then deciding to eat its fruit—even with the noble goal of getting wisdom—would be an *unwise* act. The serpent has portrayed God's words as misleading, yet it is the serpent who has spoken the misleading words. Wisdom is not acquired by rejecting God's commands but by submitting to them. In an act of defiance, the woman takes of the tree's fruit and eats, and she gives some to her husband, who is there with her, and he eats too (Gen 3:6). She does this because she believes what the serpent said, even though she knows what God said. Did Adam hear the whole conversation between the serpent and the woman? The narrator says he "was with her" when she gave him the fruit. So even though he knows what God has said, he too defies the divine command and follows the wrong initiative of his wife.

The whole scene in Genesis 3 brims with disorder.<sup>5</sup> Rather than subduing the serpent, the woman falls into deception, and Adam follows her into sin. They fail to exercise dominion over the creeping thing. The creeping thing exercises dominion over them! By inverting the created order, the serpent brings chaos not only into the garden but also into the relationship between Adam and Eve and in their relationship with God. The serpent approached the woman with his twisted words. Adam did not protect his wife, Eve did not trust the Lord, and neither Adam nor Eve subdued the vile creature who raised his words against God's goodness and command.

"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen 3:7).

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<sup>5</sup>For a book-length treatment of Gen 3 and its role and echoes in subsequent biblical revelation, see Mitchell L. Chase, *Short of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Exploration of the Fall* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023).

## OPEN EYES AND A CLOSED DOOR

The serpent's words had promised a desirable knowledge—"you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5)—and so we must evaluate the actual result of the couple's action. We know they felt shame at their nakedness and vulnerability, because they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves (Gen 3:7). They hid from the Lord when they heard his presence among them (Gen 3:8). And when the Lord questioned what they did, Adam pointed to his wife, and she pointed to the serpent (Gen 3:12-13).

Their "open eyes" do not quite bring the experience of godlikeness that the serpent promised (Gen 3:5). Though earlier naked and not ashamed, they are now naked and ashamed (Gen 2:25; 3:7, 10). They seized the fruit and, in doing so, reached for moral autonomy as well.<sup>6</sup> The narrative shows that the pursuit of moral autonomy is foolish. The ensuing consequences that God pronounced (in Gen 3:14-19) confirm the foolishness of the couple's actions, and the consequences confirm the deceptiveness of the serpent's words.

Before God exiles the couple from the Garden of Eden, he says, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:22). At first glance, the Lord seems to be agreeing with what the serpent told the woman ("you will be like God, knowing good and evil," Gen 3:5). But in the context of Genesis 3, this "knowledge" has resulted in shame and seclusion. While the man and woman now have a greater sense of right and wrong, they gained this knowledge *through sin*. Instead of trusting God's goodness and timing, they seized moral autonomy and committed evil.

Having eaten from the forbidden tree, they will not be able to eat from the tree of life. The exile from Eden ensures that the man will not "take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever" (Gen 3:22). The biblical narrative in Genesis 2 does not report whether the man or woman had eaten from the tree of life at any point. The Lord had not forbidden that tree, but exile will now make such eating impossible.

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<sup>6</sup>According to Longman, "By eating the fruit of the tree, Adam and Eve are not gaining new information; they rather arrogate to themselves rather than to God the right to define moral categories. God has told them it was wrong to eat of the fruit, but in the act of eating it, they reject God's authority and assert their own right to determine what is right and what is wrong." Tremper Longman III, *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 95.

Unpermitted eating was foolish, and foolishness brought destruction and exile. The Lord drives the man east of the garden (Gen 3:24), and we are right to assume that the woman—whom Adam names Eve (Gen 3:20)—goes into exile too. The narrative of Genesis 1–3 intertwines the ideas of obedience and blessing, but it also intertwines rebellion and judgment. Wisdom and life go together; foolishness and death go together.

In order to close the entrance to the garden, God appoints cherubim, complete with a flaming sword, to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen 3:24). Ironically, the cherubim will guard the garden because the man failed to do so. Physical alienation from Eden symbolizes the deeper problem that sin and folly cause. The fool chooses his own way and rejects God's way. Such folly leads to destruction. And how could it not? If God is the source of all goodness and life, then a rejection of wisdom will reap the opposite of goodness and life.

### THE FOLLY OF THE FIRST SON

Everyone who was ever born was born outside Eden. With the commission to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28), Adam and Eve bear children. Each birth is into a fallen world where the presence of sin and corruption will be manifest. The problem of sin affects not only Adam and Eve but also their descendants.

The first two children are Cain and Abel, and in the course of time, each brings an offering to the Lord (Gen 4:1-4). The Lord receives Abel's offering, but he rejects Cain's. He tells Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it" (Gen 4:6-7).

Nowhere in God's words to Cain does the term *wisdom* appear. But the Lord is certainly exhorting Cain to wisdom and away from folly. Sin is like a predator, crouching and biding its time, waiting for the opportune moment to jump and conquer. If Cain is not subduing sin, sin will be subduing him.<sup>7</sup> The problem with Cain is inward; it is his heart. If Cain is not right before

<sup>7</sup>In the words of John Owen, "Cease not a day from this work; be killing sin, or it will be killing you." Owen, *The Mortification of Sin* (Glasgow: Christian Focus, 2006), 27.

God, no animal offering can make Cain right. Because of God's warning to Cain in Genesis 4:6-7, apparently sin has been encroaching into Cain's life in subtle and poisonous ways.

We know that Cain is being subdued by wickedness because of the decision he makes regarding his brother. Cain speaks to Abel, and when they are in the field, Cain murders him (Gen 4:8). What words did Cain speak? The text does not tell us. But surely Cain did not share his plan ahead of time with Abel. His words must have been deceptive. And just like sin was ready to pounce on Cain, he pounced on his brother Abel and killed him.

Cain rejected God's warning and chose folly. In a scene reminiscent of Genesis 3, the narrator tells us in Genesis 4 that the Lord asks Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" (Gen 4:9). This question recalls God's words to Adam, "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9). The difference in the questions is that the Lord asks Cain not about Cain's whereabouts but about *Abel's* whereabouts. The Lord does not ask these questions because he needs information. He asks these questions because the image bearer needs to reckon with what happened. Apart from transparency and confession, repentance will not be genuine.

Though Adam answers the Lord's question truthfully (Gen 3:10, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself"), Cain rejects the Lord's question and lies: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9). He responds to the Lord's question with a question, a statement of arrogance and indifference.

In fact, Cain's question in Genesis 4:9 is the first question from an image bearer in the biblical story line. The question surprises us in its boldness: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The interpreter knows that God is right and Cain is wrong. Cain is supposed to be his brother's keeper. But the way of folly corrupts the way of love. It is no surprise that Cain's wicked heart overflowed in a wicked act against his righteous brother. As an image bearer in God's world, Cain needed to exercise dominion over the sin that crouched and desired to have him. In other words, Cain needed to be wise.

The death of Abel demonstrates a terrible effect of foolishness. Foolishness inhibits a love for neighbor. Cain disobeyed the Lord and harmed his brother, and these actions show that human folly moves in multiple directions,

vertically and horizontally. If we are to love God and love neighbor, we need to love wisdom and hate sin. But the narrative of Genesis reports the great love for sin that abounded among the generations.

### **CALLING UPON THE NAME OF YAHWEH**

As Adam's descendants were fruitful and multiplied, the world contained both the wicked and the righteous. In place of Abel, the Lord gave Adam and Eve a son, whom they named Seth (Gen 4:25). And the narrator says that "people began to call upon the name of the LORD" (Gen 4:26). Though Cain and others (like Lamech in Gen 4:23-24) did what was foolish, there were image bearers whose hearts trusted and worshiped the Lord.

The genealogy in Genesis 5 confirms the presence of godly descendants. Enoch, in Genesis 5:21-23, had the unique experience of being "taken" by the Lord apart from earthly death. Enoch's life was one of walking with God (Gen 5:22, 24). The metaphor of walking is about how a person lived. Enoch communed with God and obeyed him. Therefore, his "walk" was wise, and God honored him for it. This honor of being taken was unusual, because the all the surrounding names in the genealogy are lives that ended with a death announcement.

Life in a fallen world was complicated, because the seed of the woman (those who trusted and loved the Lord) lived among the seed of the serpent (those who rebelled against the Lord and took on the spiritual likeness of the evil one). Those who trusted in Yahweh and called upon his name were aware of the hope for a promised son who would defeat the serpent. An example of such hope is clear in the words of Lamech—not the wicked Lamech of Genesis 4:23-24 but the righteous Lamech of Genesis 5:28-31.

Lamech fathered a son and named him Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands" (Gen 5:29). Lamech's hope was shaped by the divine promise in Genesis 3:15, that a son from Eve would crush the serpent in victory, a victory that the son would accomplish through his own suffering. Since Lamech's words echoed the hope of Genesis 3:15, that hope would have been more widely known and would have certainly been proclaimed by the first image bearers during the generations after their exile from Eden.

Lamech believed the promise of God, and he hoped for the victorious son. While Noah was not the promised deliverer, Lamech's hope in God was real, and he was among those who called upon the name of the Lord.

## **FOLLY AND THE FLOOD**

According to Genesis 6, wickedness was widespread. The description of the sons of God seeing the daughters of men as “attractive” and then taking any they chose (Gen 6:2) is an intertextual callback to Genesis 3:6, where Eve “saw” that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a “delight” to the eyes, and then she “took” of its fruit to eat.

The similarity in the language establishes that sinners are choosing folly outside the garden, generation by generation. There is debate regarding the identities of those participating in the sin of Genesis 6:1-4, but image bearers are certainly involved to some degree. In fact, the Lord's evaluation of the sinful condition is comprehensive and condemning: “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5). So he pledged to “blot out” humankind from the face of the earth (Gen 6:7).

The great flood was God's judgment on the great folly of humankind. The widespread corruption was clear in the widespread violence (Gen 6:11-12). So God caused water from the ground and from the sky to close like watery jaws on the earth (Gen 7:11-24). Only Noah, his wife, their sons, and their sons' wives survived, and their survival was because of Noah's trust in and submission to God's words. Noah built an ark that endured the flood.

When the waters subsided and the image bearers emerged, God blessed Noah and his sons and said, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 9:1). This commission echoes Genesis 1:28 and confirms that the pre-flood responsibility continued in Noah's life, as if Noah were a new Adam. Just as Adam and Eve had children of different spiritual conditions, so also did Noah's sons demonstrate the spiritual states of their hearts. Ham's action in Genesis 9:22 brought shame on his father, while Shem and Japheth's actions were wise, discerning, and honoring to their father (Gen 9:23).

Noah's words to Ham were a prophetic judgment. The situation recalls Genesis 3, when shame and nakedness led to consequences (Gen 3:7, 10, 16-19).

Now in Genesis 9 a situation of shame and nakedness leads to judgment. Noah says to Ham, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers” (Gen 9:25). He also speaks regarding his other two sons, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant” (Gen 9:26-27).

The action of Ham, and the corresponding judgment of his offspring (Canaan), confirm that sin and folly did not perish in the flood. Ham had been on the ark, and now his foolishness became known.

### **A TOWER OF FOOLISHNESS**

The opening chapters of Genesis teach us that rebelling against the Lord is foolish, and foolishness reaps judgment. These chapters also teach us that submitting to the Lord’s commands is wise, and the wise enjoy the blessing of God. These lessons continue in Genesis 11, in the story of a building project.

In the land of Shinar, people say, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly” (Gen 11:3). The language “Come, let us” is an echo of God’s words in Genesis 1. The people in Shinar are image bearers, but the way they speak might suggest a dangerous pursuit. When their plan becomes more explicit, the danger of their thinking becomes clearer to the reader: “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth” (Gen 11:4).

The desire to “make a name for ourselves” is troubling, because only God’s name is worthy of exaltation. Here are image bearers behaving as if they are God. Here are image bearers engaging in a project as if they are going to unite earth to heaven with their tower. The presence of a city probably indicates that the tower was like an ancient ziggurat, a place of worship and theological symbolism.

Human folly makes doctrinal errors. These image bearers in Genesis 11 cannot build a tower to the heavens. They cannot secure a name for themselves when they exist in the image of one who is greater. Because the unity of the people manifests in dishonorable activity, the Lord disperses them. He says,

“Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech” (Gen 11:7).

The confusion of human language impedes their united plans for self-exaltation and false worship. Such confusion results in dispersion. Though they wanted to avoid being dispersed over the face of the earth (Gen 11:4), the outcome is that very thing (Gen 11:9). Human folly in Genesis 11 raised its plans against the Lord, and folly fails. Marks of wisdom include a realization of God’s greatness and worth and the importance of honoring him. On the other hand, marks of foolishness include a stubborn delusion of self-aggrandizement and the idea that human plans can prevail over what God has pronounced.

Those builders in Genesis 11:1-9 witnessed the dissolution of their name-building scheme. When we read about God’s response to their plans, we learn from the narrator about good and evil. We hear the words of sinners who arrogantly presume with their words (“Come, let us”), and the outcome shows us the failed path of their rebellion.

## CONCLUSION

The goal of this chapter is to lay the foundation for the Bible’s teaching about wisdom, and this foundation depends on the Bible’s first book.<sup>8</sup> The words *wise* and *wisdom* do not appear in Genesis 1–11, but wise and foolish actions appear throughout. Obedience and blessing and life hold together like a threefold cord not easily broken. And disobedience and judgment and death go together as well.

In the Garden of Eden was a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the notion of knowing good and evil is part of the concept of wisdom. Yet, seizing moral autonomy in the hope for more wisdom is not only unwise; it is also detrimental to our lives as image bearers. God has made us to represent him faithfully in his world, that we might subdue and

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<sup>8</sup>As Belcher puts it, “The God of creation is the God of salvation history. Genesis 1–3 contains all the elements of order, disorder, covenant, law and the beginnings of salvation history. These facts do not prove that Genesis 1–3 is wisdom literature, but it is important that these ideas are closely associated with each other in this foundational text.” Richard P. Belcher Jr., *Finding Favour in the Sight of God: A Theology of Wisdom Literature*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018), 13.

exercise dominion. But the path of foolishness is marked by crouching sins seeking to devour us, seeking to conquer and subdue us. Human folly rejects God's good design and good commands. The Genesis narratives show the delusion of sinners and the consequences of their defiance.

When we read Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 5:29, we see that our hope is that a promised son will undo the fruit of human folly and overcome the curse of sin and death. If divine wisdom has made the world, divine wisdom can also save the world.

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