

THE LION-LAMB'S WISDOM - REV. 5:12 #3

Mary Miller was numb. She just couldn't believe the news. Her husband who had appeared to be in perfect health had just dropped dead playing tennis. Mary suddenly was left with the entire responsibility of raising 6 children between 10 years of age and 18 months.

As Mary staggered to a chair, her only thought was to cry out to God for help. She knew that she couldn't possibly make it without Him. The next few days were a blur, preparing for the funeral, trying her best to help each of the children cope with his or her sudden loss. It was only after the funeral was over that the reality of her situation began to settle in on Mary.

Mary was fortunate to have a pretty comfortable financial situation. Her husband was a professional who had left an adequate insurance policy. So she wasn't overly concerned with paying the bills and the family didn't have to move into a new house. Mary was even able to keep her housekeeper who stayed with the family from Monday to Friday each week.

But the weekends were most difficult for Mary when she was all alone with the children. It seemed that she heard every creak of the house, every unusual noise - and her imagination would just run wild. From Friday evening until Monday morning, when she was alone with the children, Mary's mind was obsessed with fears and anxiety. So Mary Miller began to pray that God would meet her need, that He would relieve her from these fears that were so oppressing her mind.

The next Friday evening, after her housekeeper had said good-bye for the

weekend, Mary found a large German shepherd at her door. The big, strong animal gave every indication that he wanted to enter the house and make himself right at home. But Mary was naturally wary. After all, the German shepherd looked so foreboding. Could she possibly let him near her children? Even though the dog seemed friendly, he still looked powerful enough to command respect. So Mary was naturally cautious. But the older children took an immediate liking to this dog that they named *German* and begged their mother to let him come into the house. Reluctantly, Mary agreed and *German* stayed with them the rest of the evening. When they put *German* out for the night, he slept right on the doorstep until the next morning.

The following day, Mary Miller had planned to take the children on a picnic. Because she was sure that someone was looking for their lost dog, she left *German* outside while she drove off with the kids in their station wagon. Imagine her surprise when she stopped a block away for gas to see *German* sprinting after their vehicle. When he caught up with the car that was parked by the pump, he jumped right up on the hood and looked into the front window. It was obvious to the whole family that *German* wanted to join them on their picnic. So the kids welcomed him into the back of the car and off they went.

German stayed with the Miller family Saturday night and Sunday night while Mary was thinking of ways to advertise for a lost dog. She was sure that some family was grieving the loss of their family pet. But Monday morning, just as the housekeeper was coming for her week's work, *German* wandered away from the yard and Mary didn't see the dog again.

That is, she didn't see the dog again until that Friday afternoon when the housekeeper was ready to take off for the weekend. As the housekeeper was getting into her car, *German* showed up at the door and wanted back into the house again. Throughout that weekend, the dog who was now more familiar with the kids and house would go from bedroom to bedroom each night saying *good-night* to the kids and making sure they were all tucked in safely. Then *German* would lay down himself by the door. Mary slept much more soundly and felt much more secure.

To make a long story shorter, for 10 months this German shepherd arrived at the Miller door every Friday afternoon when the housekeeper was getting into her car to leave for the weekend and left the Miller yard to unknown places every Monday morning when the housekeeper was arriving to work for the week. And every month, Mary Miller was getting stronger and stronger in her faith in God and in her confidence of caring for the family by herself. At the end of the 10 months *German* failed to appear one Friday. The Miller family never saw *German* again. But Mary Miller coped just fine that weekend with just her and the kids in the house. And she is convinced to this day that *German* was a very special gift that God gave to her during her time of great need. This German shepherd came to picture the very presence of God himself for Mary - always there watching over her family.

One of the most precious attributes of Almighty God is His omnipresence - the fact that as an infinite Spirit, God is everywhere in the fullness of His being all of the time. Usually connected with God's omnipresence in the Bible is His

omniscience - that fact that God knows all things, that nothing is hidden from His knowledge. The logical connection is that because God is everywhere in the fullness of His being all of the time, there is nothing that can escape his scrutiny - He knows everything that there is to know. But God not only knows all things, but He also has the ability to use this knowledge to the best possible advantage. So the Bible also speaks of the infinite wisdom of God - the fact that God is all-wise, that He always thinks and acts in the best possible manner.

It should not surprise us then to find wisdom as one of the attributes that the angelic hosts extol in singing praise to the Lion-Lamb in that heavenly scene portrayed in Revelation 5. We have been looking at the 7 characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ that are found in this great song of praise. We have already seen His power and wealth. Now this morning, we come to an examination of His wisdom. Let me refresh your memory as to this song of praise found in Revelation 5:11,12:

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Now we have seen in each case so far that the attribute which the angelic hosts extol finds a foundation in some part of this heavenly scene that the Apostle John say in this vision.

*the power of the Lion-Lamb was illustrated by the fact that He was the only

one who had the authority and ability to take the scroll from the hand of God the Father, executing all of the divine plan for blessing and judgment as found in Revelation 5:1-5:

5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

*The wealth of the Lion-Lamb was illustrated by the 24 elders who laid their crowns at His feet and acknowledged His position as the creator and sustainer of all things in the last verse of chapter 4 - Rev. 4:11:

Revelation 4:10-11 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Now we find as well the wisdom of God revealed in a small detail that might have easily been left out if it were not the expressed purpose of God to bring it to our attention. It is found in the description of the Lion-Lamb that the Apostle John saw found in Revelation 5:6:

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Now this lamb that the Apostle John saw was very unusual. For one thing, it appeared to have been mortally wounded. It

looked as if it had been killed. This obviously is a reference to the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ who willingly offered himself as a sin sacrifice so that all who believe in him might be cleansed and forgiven for their sins by God. But the fact that the lamb had a mortal wound was not its only distinction. John also mentions that the lamb had 7 horns and 7 eyes. Now we have to assume the meaning of the 7 horns for John does not give that to us. Most likely the horns on the lamb's head represent his sovereignty - his ability to rule for that is how this symbol is most often used in prophetic writings. Daniel often found the horn to be symbolic of ruling power in his visions. You might remember that the renowned world conqueror who we remember as Alexander the Great was represented by a great horn on the head of a goat in Daniel 8:8. When that large horn was broken off, 4 other horns appeared predicting that when Alexander the Great died, 4 rulers would replace him. And that is exactly what happened in history several hundred years after Daniel wrote the prediction - Alexander the Great died in the prime of his life and the Greek Empire was divided among his 4 generals. A chapter earlier, Daniel had seen a great beast in a vision with 10 horns on its head. Another little horn arose and took prominence over the other horns uprooting 3 of them (Daniel 7:7,8). In his own interpretation of the vision, Daniel says as recorded in Dan. 7:24, *the 10 horns are 10 kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue 3 kings.* Daniel then goes on to identify this king who is represented by the horn as the one whom we call the Antichrist who will come during the tribulation period. So the horn is typically used in apocalyptic literature to represent kings or

kingdoms or ruling. 7 is the number of perfection or completion in the Bible. God created the universe in 7 days. The Sabbatical cycle was 7 years in the O.T. So the lamb having 7 horns would indicate his perfect ability to rule. Probably the symbol was so obvious to John's readers that he didn't feel a need to explain it.

But then John goes on to say that the lamb had 7 eyes. And he does explain what he means by this although we could have easily guessed this one as well. The 7 eyes are the *7 spirits of God sent out into all the earth*. In other words, the 7 eyes represent the Lamb's ability to see or know everything that is going on throughout the whole earth. The eyes symbolize the Lamb's omniscience - the fact that he has complete or perfect knowledge of everything that is going on, again 7 being the number of perfection or completion. So John immediately realizes that this Lamb who he sees standing on the throne of God is One who knows everything - nothing is hidden from his awareness.

But it is interesting how the angelic hosts go a step further in their adoration of the lamb. They praise the lamb for his wisdom. You see, not only does the Lamb of God know all things, but He has the ability to put that perfect knowledge to the best use in wisdom. For there is a distinct difference between mere knowledge and wisdom.

If knowledge were all that were necessary for solving all problems, then we would be closer to solving all the world's problems than ever today. For there has never been a time when there has been a greater explosion of knowledge than today. We have more knowledge at our fingertips today than ever before. For most of the history of mankind, any written material was hand copied and

treasured as a most prized possession. If a Christian owned a portion of the Scriptures, he considered himself very fortunate. If he owned another Christian book, he would be wealthy indeed. Today, we have almost unlimited resources of knowledge right at the tip of our fingers. We can Google on the internet and find out something about anything. We can tap into libraries and find books about any subject. I have a site on my favorites list from Wheaton College that contains the entire library of all the classics in Christian literature that have ever been written. With a couple of flicks of my mouse, I can read any one of hundreds of the best Christian books ever written. The amount of knowledge that is found on the internet is just staggering to the imagination. It reminds us of the prophecy of Daniel that in the last days knowledge would increase.

But with the explosion of knowledge in our day, is wisdom growing at the same rate? Are people generally evidencing the ability to put this knowledge to the best practical use in solving problems and developing their character? Is plain common sense growing? I think we would all agree that wisdom is lagging far behind knowledge's growth chart. In fact, it could be argued that in some ways former generations that had far less knowledge demonstrated far greater wisdom than is generally found today.

The Lamb of God not only has perfect knowledge, but he has perfect wisdom as well. He knows what is the best, most advantageous, most practical, most beneficial course to take in any decision of life. He knows because He has perfect knowledge - he never overlooks any fact. And He knows because He has the perfect ability to put that knowledge to best use, He is all-wise as well as being all-

knowing.

Now what are some practical applications of the Lion-Lamb's wisdom that we need to remember. Let me just give 2 in closing this morning, first one that reminds us of our accountability and then one that gives comfort to our hearts.

1. We all need to constantly remember that we can never hide anything from the Lamb of God. He is omniscient; he is perfect in wisdom. To even try to hide something from Him is a great insult to His person and character.

One of the enemy's most foolish lies is his attempt to convince people that they can hide something from God. It started right in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve had committed the first sin. When God came down to walk with them in fellowship in the coolness of the evening, He found them hiding behind a bush. They foolishly thought that they could hide from the presence of God. And ever since that day, people have tried to hide their sins and faults from God. It is just as foolish for us to try to hide our sins from God today as it was for Adam and Eve to crouch behind a bush deluding themselves into thinking that God would never find them. An omniscient God knows every thought we think, every plan we make, every deed we do. We can't hide anything from Him - it is fruitless to try.

Now there is great comfort in this - for there is no good deed that escapes the notice of God. Because He is omniscient, he knows every benevolent act that His people do. The author of Hebrews writes, *God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. Heb. 6:10*

But if we are brutally honest with ourselves, we will admit that God's omniscience is also threatening to us. For God not only sees the good things we do, but He also sees all of our sins - no matter how secret we think they are. We can't hide any of them from God. It is threatening for us to realize that we really don't have any absolute privacy - for God knows all things. But even in this area, God's omniscience can be of great encouragement to us. For God has promised to cleanse us completely as we confess or admit our sins to Him. Because God knows everything, He is able to completely cleanse us. The Apostle John wrote earlier in his first Epistle, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.*

So the omniscient wisdom of the Lamb brings a sense of accountability to us and it also gives us hope. Because of the 7 eyes of the Lamb, we need not fear that any good work will be overlooked and we have the confidence that we can be completely cleansed from sin as we admit our sins to an all-knowing God.

2. But there is a second application that also brings great comfort and assurance to our hearts. The Christian has a source of knowledge and wisdom far greater than any educational institution or reference resource on the internet. The Lamb of God is perfect in knowledge and wisdom. And this Lamb of God gives an open invitation to each of His children to share this vast resource of wisdom.

Listen to these words found in James 1:5: *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

Daniel as a young teenager had been put into a seemingly impossible

situation. He had been torn from his family and homeland against his will. He had been placed in this Babylonian training school where he had been subjected to every attempt to brainwash him. He had been given a new name, a new identity. And now soldiers had showed up at his door informing him that he was scheduled to be killed with the other advisors to the king. King Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed a vision that he instinctively knew was very significant. So he had called his advisors and had commanded them to recall the dream and give him to correct interpretation to it. His command to recall the dream was given so that he could be sure that they weren't scamming him with some made up interpretation. The king's request was an impossible one, of course, for who of us could possibly know what somebody else is dreaming? So predictably, none of the senior advisors had been able to tell the king his dream let alone its interpretation. King Nebuchadnezzar was so furious that he would never know the meaning of this significant dream that he ordered all of his advisors to be put to death. The students in Daniel's school had not even been told about the king's unreasonable request because it was assumed that if the graduates could not recall the dream, how could the students possibly do it? But in his irrational rage, Nebuchadnezzar had decreed the same fate for the students as for the graduate advisors. They all were to be put to death. What was Daniel to do? How could he ever save his life and the lives of his friends from this seemingly impossible situation? Daniel reasoned that while he knew that he didn't have the wisdom to recall the dream, he knew someone who would have that kind of wisdom. He was Almighty God. He was the one who knew all things. Nothing was hidden from God – not even

dreams that someone had in the privacy of their own bedrooms at night. So Daniel requested time to pray to God and ask his help in recalling the dream. It didn't take God long to reveal the hidden dream to Daniel. Daniel was able to tell Nebuchadnezzar what he had dreamed and the interpretation of it. After God had revealed the hidden dream to Daniel, the student advisor prayed this prayer recorded in Daniel 2:20-23:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

Do you have questions about some decision in life? Do you wonder what marketing plan would be best for your company? Do you wish that you knew what method of discipline would be most effective for your child? Do you have some physical ailment that you just can't seem to pinpoint? Do you have need for some specific point of wisdom in your life?

God's invitation is clear. If anyone realizes a lack of wisdom in his or her life, he is invited to come to a God who is perfect in wisdom and ask for help. And this God promises that He will share His wisdom generously with His children.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom .

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