

## **Righteousness and Eternity**

Wisdom (Deuterocanonical)

by Don Falkos

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Seek the Lord with all your heart. Only there will you find true wisdom. The Lord created all things simply that they might be. The Lord's immortal spirit is in all of creation. The Lord loves all of creation and made all that is beautiful. The Lord cares for all people and rules all things. Only the foolish look around themselves and do not see the hand of God. Only the foolish worship the creation rather than the Creator. Only the foolish worship man-made idols instead of devoting themselves to the living God. Ally yourself with the Lord and receive God's gift of wisdom. The righteous are in the hand of God, and knowing God's power is the root of immortality.

The wicked say:

Life is short and full of sorrow. You were born by chance. You came from nothing, and you'll return to nothing. After you're gone, no one's going to remember your name or what you've accomplished. Your life is like a passing shadow, and then you die. So forget all that. Enjoy the good things life has to offer. Eat well, drink fine wine, and indulge in whatever pleasures you desire. Don't be bothered by the man who comes to you and says, "God is not pleased with your behavior." Let loose on that man! Hurl insults at him; beat him up; or have your way with him if that's your inclination. See if his God will protect him.

Yes, that's what the wicked say. But the wicked are wrong.

Life is not about short-term pleasure. God created us for righteousness and for eternity. The righteous may suffer greatly and even die an early death, but they are eternally safe and at rest with God. Not so the wicked. The fruits of their own sin provide their punishment. They will suffer great remorse at their own foolishness – even if they're rich. Wealth and power are meaningless without God's wisdom. The most exalted ruler may be rejected, while a poor wretch lying in the gutter enters into eternity with the Lord.

Wisdom is easily found; she seeks out those who desire her. She is all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere present; she is pure and loving, holy and good. Seek her out and live. Wisdom protected Adam when he was alone in the garden and Noah in the ark. She guided Abraham, Lot, Jacob, and Joseph. Through Moses, Wisdom led the people of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and across the barren wilderness.

In counterpoint to the very things by which the Egyptians were punished, the Israelites were blessed. The water of the Nile became undrinkable, whereas the Israelites were given water that flowed out of a rock in the desert. Frogs emerged from the Nile to overrun Egypt; they died and rotted, and the Egyptians lost their appetites and became ill. But quail came from the sea in huge numbers, overran the Israelite camp, and provided them with an enormous supply of food. Egyptians were killed by the bites of

locusts and flies, yet God saved the Israelites from the bites of venomous snakes. The Egyptian food supply was destroyed by hail, yet God provided manna from heaven to feed the Israelites. The Egyptians, who had kept the Lord's children imprisoned, were themselves imprisoned in darkness. On the other hand, the Israelites, through whom the imperishable light of God's Law would be given to the world, were guided on their way by light from the pillar of fire. All of Egypt's firstborn died by a plague in a single night. But after Korah's rebellion, when a plague struck the people of Israel, Aaron ran into the midst of the people with burning incense, providing atonement for them, which saved their lives. The Egyptian army was drowned in the waters of the Red Sea, while the Israelites crossed to the other side on dry ground.

In all of this, nature acted outside its usual boundaries in order to bring about God's redemptive purposes. For the Lord never fails at any time or in any place to assist the righteous.