

### **Proverbs 8:27–29 (LSBN): Christ as Wisdom**

According to Proverbs, Wisdom was present already in eternity, before the creation of the world and, consequently, before there even was such a thing as time. Along the same lines, Jesus said, “And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed” (Jn 17:5). In Pr 8, Wisdom is given birth by God, even though Wisdom was present from eternity. Likewise, Jesus is God’s only-begotten Son; that is, “His only Son” (Jn 3:16).

John’s Gospel begins with a description of Jesus as “the Word.” This description connects Jesus with the Wisdom of Proverbs, which calls out and makes its appeals. John declares, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (Jn 1:1–2). Wisdom was also present with God in the beginning (Pr 8:22).

### **An Ancient Yet Modern Controversy**

In the fourth century after Christ, a controversy broke out in the Christian churches. Focusing on this portion of Proverbs, the followers of the priest Arius argued that the Son of God was a created being and not eternal God. They argued that there was a time when the Son of God did not exist. Much of their argument rested on a faulty Greek translation of Pr 8:22: “The Lord created Me,” instead of “The Lord possessed Me.”

In our day, the Jehovah’s Witnesses have taken up this ancient heresy and contend that Jesus, the Son of God, is not true God. To support their false doctrine, they even mistranslate Scripture, such as Jn 1:1. Their New World Translation says, “The Word was a god,” instead of, “The Word was God.” Their false translation makes Jesus a second-level god alongside the heavenly Father. Clearly, this teaching does not fit with Holy Scripture, which teaches that there is only one God! (Cf Is 45:18–21; see p 1815.)

At the time of creation, Wisdom said, “I was beside [God], like a master workman” (Pr 8:30). Passages in the NT attribute this to Christ, e.g., Col 1:15–17; firstborn in this passage is used in a specific sense. It does not mean the first child born into a family. Rather, it refers to the inheritance rights of the one who held the honors of a firstborn son. (E.g., King David is called “firstborn” in Ps 89:27, even though he was the youngest son in his family [1Sm 16:11–13]. In view of this, when Paul calls Jesus “the firstborn of all creation,” he means that Jesus rules all creation, not that He was created, for “all things were created through Him and for Him.”)

Faithful Christians in the Early Church, led by the great Church Father Athanasius, carefully studied Pr 8 and other passages of Holy Scripture. They recognized that while the Son of God is begotten, He is also co-eternal with God the Father. Out of this research into God's Word came the Nicene Creed, by which Christians still confess faith in Jesus Christ as "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made."

When we come face-to-face with the eternally begotten Son and other mysteries concerning the triune God, we are in realms beyond human comprehension. We can no more capture the eternal, omnipotent God within our minds than we can hold the ocean in a bucket. The wonder of it all is that the almighty Creator has come to us to save us. Jesus is God. He is also our Brother (Heb 2:11) who has suffered, died, and risen for us.

### **Clear through Christ**

It is often said that the OT is revealed in the NT, while the NT is concealed in the OT. In other words, what is not entirely clear in the OT becomes clear in the light of the coming of Jesus the Christ. That is what has happened with Pr 8.

The NT explicitly states that Jesus is the one "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). Or, as St Paul puts it in 1Co 1:24, Christ is "the wisdom of God." As you read Proverbs, hear the voice of your Redeemer. As the "Word of God," these are His words for you.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the Lutheran Study Bible, page 1012.