



Handout for week of 6/10/19 John 16: 12-15 & Prov. 8: 22-32

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Prov. 8: 1 Doth not wisdom call, and understanding put forth her voice? [2](#) In the top of high places by the way, where the paths meet, she standeth; [3](#) Beside the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud: [4](#) 'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.

[8:22](#) HaShem made me as the beginning of His way, the first of His works of old. [23](#) I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. [24](#) When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. [25](#) Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I

brought forth; [26](#) While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world. [27](#) When He established the heavens, I was there; when He set a circle upon the face of the deep, [28](#) When He made firm the skies above, when the fountains of the deep showed their might, [29](#) When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not transgress His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth; [30](#) Then I was by Him, as a nursling; and I was daily all delight, playing always before Him, [31](#) Playing in His habitable earth, and my delights are with the sons of men.

COMMENTARY:

Chapter 8 is the best-known chapter in Proverbs and has profoundly influenced Jewish and Christian thought. The most explicit and lengthy biblical comment is in Sir 24; it too has thirty-five lines in seven five-line stanzas and develops the theme of Wisdom's intimacy with God and desire to be with human beings. The Gospel of John portrays Jesus in the language of wisdom in Proverbs: Jesus, like Wisdom, calls out to people to listen to him, promises to tell them the truth, seeks disciples, invites them to a banquet, and gives them life. Writers in the patristic period used the language of pre-existent wisdom to express the idea of the pre-existent Word with God. The second through fifth collections allude to a monarchy, suggesting a pre-exilic setting. The first, sixth, and seventh collections are generally considered postexilic. The book as a whole does not demonstrate logical movement or plot. It was probably edited into its final form late in the fifth century B.C.E.

(24)The summary statements just given are now developed in a lengthy treatment of wisdom as the agent of all creation. This verse singles out "watery deeps" (tomh)T=, tehomot) in its allusion to creation because the word in Genesis signals the condition of the world at the very beginning, and because in the ancient world this was something no one could control. Chaos was not there first—wisdom was. (30)Critical to the interpretation of this line is the meaning of /oma* ('amon). Several suggestions have been made: "master craftsman," "nursing child," "foster father"

[8:30] Artisan: the translation of the Hebrew word 'āmōn has been controverted since antiquity. There have been three main opinions: (1) artisan; (2) trustworthy (friend); (3) ward, nursling. The most likely explanation is that 'āmōn is artisan, related to Akkadian ummānu, legendary sages and heroes who brought divine gifts and culture to the human race.