

Epistle of Ya'akov ~ 3:13-18

Wisdom from Above

In this post, we learn that there are two kinds of **wisdom**. That which is **worldly, unspiritual, and demonic** produces **jealousy and selfish ambition**, followed by **disharmony and every foul practice**. **But the wisdom from above** is *from the Father*, with *whom there is neither variation nor darkness* (1:17); it is extolled in Proverbs 8:22ff. Also, compare Isaiah 32:17 and Hebrews 12:11.

You may want to go back to [Ya'akov 1:5-8](#) and review what he said about wisdom earlier.

¹³ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him demonstrate it by his good way of life, by actions done in the humility that grows out of wisdom.

The Septuagint, an ancient Greek translation of the **Tanakh**, often employs *wise and understanding* to describe a person who lives following the insight given by **God** (Deut. 1:13, 15; 4:6). People demonstrate wisdom if their deeds reflect **God's** commands. Those who are wise should demonstrate their wisdom *by actions done in the humility that grows out of wisdom*.

¹⁴ But if you harbor in your heart's bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, don't boast and attack the truth with lies!

Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition are the opposite of true wisdom as characterized by humility. They are also far different from the righteous character of a **jealous God** (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24), who appropriately yearns for His honor and the loyal devotion of His people, while the envious yearn for what does not belong to them. **Selfish ambition** is a divisive willingness to split the group to achieve personal power and prestige.

¹⁵ This wisdom is not the kind that comes down from above; on the contrary, it is worldly, unspiritual, demonic.

Worldly, unspiritual, demonic describes behavior that progresses from bad to worse, recalling the list in vv. 5b–6. Such behavior is ultimately earthbound, absolutely sensual as opposed to spiritual, and its origin is in the cosmic powers of darkness.

¹⁶ For where there are jealousy and selfish ambition, there will be disharmony and every foul practice.

Ya'akov describes the evil consequences of false wisdom. Earthly wisdom leads to **jealousy and selfish ambition**, culminating in a troubling situation for Messianic communities causing **disharmony and every foul practice**.

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is, first of all, pure, then peaceful, kind, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

The virtues **Ya'akov** lists are predominantly non-selfish and non-aggressive; those who practice these virtues show more concern for others than themselves. They are opposite of the vices described in vv. 14–16.

The answer to the **disharmony and every foul practice** (v.16) is to seek **wisdom from above**, which produces character qualities beginning with purity and concluding with mercy (cf. Gal. 5:22–23, where **Godly** qualities are the fruit of the Spirit).

¹⁸ ***And peacemakers who sow seed in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.*** ~ Ya'akov 3:13-18 (CJB)

The legacy of those who bring ***peace*** rather than conflict is a ***harvest of righteousness***. The ***fruit*** that comes from peacemaking in the **Messianic** community will be the righteous conduct that **God** will bless.

We will learn more from **Ya'akov** as we dig into what he says about **Warning Against Worldliness**.