

Proverbs 8: Location of the Oration: Wisdom Cries Out, vv. 2-3; The Allurements of the Whore, Prov 7:1-27; Idolatry Condemned, Ezk 23:30; Quatrain 1, vv. 4-5: The Universal Appeal, v. 4

Verses 2-3: Location of the Oration:

Proverbs 8:2 - On top of the heights beside the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand.

v. 3 - Beside the gates, at the opening to the city, at the entrance of the doors, she cries out: (NASB)

1. Where Wisdom takes her stand is covered in verses 2 and 3 and in the NASB they are (1) the heights, (2) the way, (3) the paths [v. 2], (4) the gates, (5) the opening, and (6) the doors [v. 3].
2. These locations designate the most public areas of the city; they are where most people gather. In verse 2 the “heights” refer to the towers above the city’s walls, the “way” refers to the main street, and the “paths” refer to the areas where the side streets intersect with the main street. How cities were laid out during Solomon’s reign is instructive:

The most important feature of the town was its wall. Some were casement walls—two parallel walls with rooms built between for merchants to stay. The walls’ shade made a good place for meetings, public speaking, conversation, and local justice. (T)owers provided for defense. The market led off the gate and streets ran off the market. ¹
3. Verse three mentions an area “beside the gates.” This refers to the marketplace which was set up just inside the main entrance to the city. Up for sale were fresh produce, products of tradesmen, and items by craftsmen.
4. Because it was at the main entrance and under the shade of the city’s walls it became the popular gathering place for residents. Consequently it was a place for meetings, trials, speeches, the carrying out of business transactions, settlement of disputes, or making political arrangements.
5. The opening to the city is the main entrance while the entrance to the doors refers to the area inside the wall at the main entrance.
6. But we must remember that the structure of Solomon’s proverb presents the personification of wisdom. Wisdom is an acquired asset that enables the believer to apply doctrine accurately to life and circumstances.
7. Therefore, since wisdom is personified, then where she calls out must be personified as well. Wisdom in the believer’s soul calls out to him as he carries out the affairs of his day.
8. The soul is the command post of the believer’s life. It is under constant assault, internally from the sin nature and externally from the demon influence.

¹ Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 2005), 172, 174-76.

9. Therefore, where do wisdom and discernment position themselves to “summon loudly” and “raise their voice”? In the soul. To maintain status quo spirituality the believer must respond to Wisdom’s call in order to protect his soul from the outside pressures of adversity and prosperity and the inside pressure of stress.
10. Wisdom is pictured as positioning herself so that a maximum number of people can hear her message:

Proverbs 8:2 - From the tower where the streets intersect with the main thoroughfare, she takes her stand;

v. 3 - beside the main gate at the city’s entrance above the marketplace she cries out. (CTL)

11. This location is as public a place as one could find and the message reaches a maximum number of people. The final verb, “she cries out,” is the Qal imperfect of **רָנַן** *ranan*:

The imperfect denotes the *beginning*, the *unfinished*, and the *continuing*, that which is just happening, which is conceived as in process of coming to pass, and hence, also, that which is yet future.²
12. *Ranan* means to shout; in the Qal imperfect it means to be continuing to put forth a cry of encouragement, exhortation, and instruction.
13. Where Wisdom carries out this act is in the *kardia* of the individual believer. The Holy Spirit recalls pertinent information that gives the believer encouragement, exhortation, and instruction regarding correct application for any given circumstance.
14. Wisdom speaks the truth with clarity and is not reticent to do so in the clear light of day. This is in direct contradistinction to the allurements of the whore who is the antagonist of Proverbs 7.
15. There we find the personification of the internal and external fifth columns and their assault on the soul of a young man. He is attracted by her enticements to make love until morning (vv. 14-20).
16. The whore operates “in the dark of the night” which means that the believer out of fellowship is vulnerable to propaganda from the dark side.
17. The whore in context may be defined as the lie, religion, idolatry, or sin.
18. In Scripture, these things are often personified by a whore. For example, Ezekiel warned the Israelites, both Samaria (the Northern Kingdom) and Jerusalem (the Southern Kingdom) that their adulterous association with heathen nations would result in being conquered by a heathen nation:

Ezekiel 23:30 - ‘I will do these things to you, because you have gone a whoring after the heathen, and because you are polluted with their idols.’

² E. Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 2d ed., rev. A. E. Cowley (New York: Clarendon Press, 1910), 125.

19. Both Israel and Judah consorted with Egypt to gain assistance in the face of threatened invasions. Judah's encounter was with King Sennacherib of Assyria, whose spokesman, called the Rabshakeh, made these comments regarding Judah's dependence on Egypt for military assistance:

2 Kings 18:19 - Then Rabshakeh said to them [**the leaders of Judah**], "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, "What is this confidence that you have?"

v. 20 - "You say, 'I have counsel and strength for the war.' Now on whom do you rely, that you have rebelled against me?"

v. 21 - "Now behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, even on Egypt; on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.""

20. Principle: You don't go to heathen for help! For a modern-day circumstance to which this can be applied we note this from current events:

The White House announced Friday that President Obama will deliver his much anticipated address to the Arab and Muslim worlds on June 4 from Egypt. (Copyright © 2009 World News Network. All rights reserved.)

21. Obama's trip is to allegedly restore relationships with the Arab world and with Islam in particular, an effort that has already resulted in open rebuke by many in the Middle East. But, since China has threatened to no longer buy U.S. Treasury notes, the next largest coffer belongs to Arabia.
22. PRINCIPLE: A client nation cannot abandon its submission to the laws of divine establishment and consciously denigrate the four divine institutions and find resolve from heathen nations. God will not allow it. Nevertheless, the United States "have gone a whoring after the heathen" and will receive their just reward:
- Ezekiel 23:35** - "Therefore, thus says the Lord God, 'Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, bear now the punishment of your lewdness and your harlotries.'"
23. The "lewdness and harlotries" refer to reversionism among the people who have either rejected God or left His teachings. Temptations are personified in Proverbs 7 by the seductress and are directed toward the believer's soul, personified in the chapter by the "son."
24. Solomon presents the ramifications of reversionism in Proverbs 7 and the rewards of wisdom in chapter 8. For contrast a reading of Proverbs 7 is helpful: Proverbs 7:1-27 (NASB).
25. The personification of wisdom begins in Proverbs 8 at verse 4.

Introduction: Quatrain 1: vv. 4-5

Verse 4: the Universal Appeal:

Proverbs 8:4 - "To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. (NASB)

1. The vocative “O men” directs this proverb to all men. It is the masculine plural of **אִישׁ 'ish** and stresses the importance of men responding to doctrine so as to acquire wisdom. They are the spiritual heads of households. If a home is to have the blessings of God then the spiritual leadership of a wise husband is the *sine qua non*.
2. The second appeal is to **בְּנֵי אָדָם ben 'adam** translated “sons of men” which refers to humanity in general.
3. To the men, Wisdom calls, the Qal imperfect of **קָרָא qara'** which is the word that introduces the proverb in verse 1, translated “to summon.”
4. Men are offered the challenge to continue the process of hearing the teachings of Wisdom. The entire human race is offered the opportunity to hear her voice.
5. PRINCIPLE: If men respond to the Wisdom’s summon then their wives and children will learn of her from these husbands and fathers. The chief responsibility of transferring wisdom from one generation to the next falls on men.

Proverbs 8:4 - To the men of the human race I keep on summoning, and the utterances of my voice are directed to all mankind. (CTL)