

NOVEMBER 14 2025 FATHER MICHAEL COUTTS

Scripture scholars tell us that the author of the Book of Wisdom was steeped in Jewish tradition. He wrote about a century before Christ, he was well-versed in Greek, and he lived in Egypt. Now, all this is what scripture scholars tell us. We don't find it actually in the Book of Wisdom as we read it.

But the Book of Wisdom takes into consideration the fact that the people are well aware of their Exodus experience. They are well aware of the fact that God took care of them during their journey through the desert to the wilderness, that God led them with a pillar of cloud during the day, with a pillar of cloud at night.

Now, given all these facts, the people of Israel should have been grateful, and they were, but gradually they began to take God for granted, and they began to seek other ways and other means of entertaining themselves. The Book of Wisdom is divided into three parts, and our section today is taken from the third part which deals with the fact that they were given into idol and false worship.

The irony was that the people were actually searching for God, but God did not come in the way that they wanted, and so they began to worship nature, trees, and a special formation of rocks, a high mountain. They saw and they said, "This is a god." And when that failed them, they began to make things out of their own hands, idols formed by human hands. And as one of the scriptures tell us, "The idols have ears, but they don't hear. They have mouths, but they don't speak. They have hands, but they do not do any actions, and, therefore, they were not there to help the people."

And this is where Wisdom says, as we heard in that very last step, "If only they could see the living God in all these things." There was the beauty of nature. There was the wonder of creation all around them. And all of these pointed out to a creator, but they failed to see it.

It would be like a person driving into Toronto, and across the six lanes, sees a bright—(Coughing)—excuse me—sees a sign says "Toronto" with an arrow pointing ahead, and says, "I've reached Toronto," and parks on the side and remains there. We need to go beyond what we see. We have to see, look at the big, beautiful skies and look at the passion and the strength of the waters, look at the mountains that challenge us.

You know, David, in King David, wrote the eighth psalm: "When I look at the heavens, the works of Your hands, the moon and the stars that I see, what is human beings that you keep us in mind, mortals, that You even care for us?" But David was only looking in the sky. The author of the Book of Wisdom tells us, "Look all around you in creation. It is right over there for you to see." And that is what he challenges them. Open your eyes to see. Open your ears to hear. But most especially, open your heart, because the God who made all these things is speaking to you and drawing each one of you into the very person of God.

This has been the query of human beings from times of Moses, when he says, "Lord, show me Your face." Moses wanted to see God face to face, and every human being wants to get out and beyond himself. I remember when we were doing the philosophy, we had Saint Thomas Aquinas's "Use your brains." And there are five things and five proofs of God's existence:

- A proof from motion. There must be, with everything in motion, somebody who is unmovable who moves things.
- A proof from creation. We're all creatures, but there must be one who is uncreated that creates us all.
- A proof from contingency. Everything is changing, but there must be something that never changes who causes us all to change.
- A proof from perfection. We are all perfect in some sense, but we've got imperfection within ourselves, but there must be one who does not need any more to be totally perfect.

- And finally, the one that the author of the Book of Wisdom writes is the proof from design. We see the whole of the universe designed so beautifully. There must be somebody who designed this. In each of these cases, this person we call "God."

And Elizabeth Barrett Browning has described it in such a beautiful way: "The earth is crammed with Heaven and every bush aflame with God. For those who see, they remove their shoes. For those who don't, they sit down and pluck blackberries."

Now, here are signs that we will see. In the gospel, we have the Day of the Lord, and there will be no signs to tell us about the Day of the Lord. In the time of Amos, and in the time of Isaiah, the Day of the Lord was a day of glory, where all the people who were faithful to God would be vindicated, would be rewarded. All their just works would be acknowledged. But later on, when we began to fall away from acknowledging that God is the One who made us, who created us, and who holds us in the palm of His hands, the day of the Lord became the day of reckoning.

And Jesus uses two historical facts, at least according to the Old Testament: the fact of Noah and the flood, the fact of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. So, no signs were given, so be alert and know exactly that the Day of the Lord will come, and when it comes, you will be caught standing, and saying, "I didn't even expect it." But the people who are faithful, the people who live according to God's law, and God's promise, and live according to their right conscience, will always be totally at ease, and at peace, because there's harmony in their life, there's discipline in their life, and they know that God is right there in their midst.

May the same God bless and take care of you.