

# TEACHABLENESS

Gary McDade

The Second Psalm calls for wisdom from the kings and judges of the earth, “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (vv. 10-11). *Why?* Because “the alternatives of wrath or refuge, perishing or blessing lie before them.”<sup>1</sup> The admonition for them to “be wise” indicates their need to show intelligence or discernment.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew verb translated “be instructed” is a so-called *Niphal tolerativum*, bearing resemblance to the Greek reflexive middle voice; unrelated examples of which would be *to take heed to oneself, to answer for oneself, to hide oneself*—all actions pointing back to *oneself* or “reflexive.” The meaning of the Hebrew verb in Psalm 2 would, therefore, be “to let one’s self be chastened or instructed.”<sup>3</sup> So, true wisdom is seen in “letting one’s self be chastened or instructed.”

“Teachableness” may be understood as being “open minded” or “receptive.” In Psalm 2 we are seeing “teachableness” comes from instruction one will allow himself or herself to receive. The same type of Hebrew verb form appears in Proverbs 13:10 carrying the meaning, “to allow one’s self to be advised.” Proverbs 13:10 says, “Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.” Again, the same type of Hebrew verb appears in Ezekiel 14:3, “to allow one’s self to be sought.” Ezekiel was asked by God, “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?” Emphasizing the Hebrew verb construction under consideration God is asking Ezekiel, “Should I allow myself to be sought by them or inquired of by them?”<sup>4</sup>

God will “allow Himself to be found” by those who are “teachable.” Consider again this Hebrew verb construction we’ve been following through this brief study, this time from 1 Chronicles 28:9, “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, *he will be found of thee*; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever” (emphasis added). When the foregoing stipulations enumerated in the verse are performed, God will allow Himself to be found.<sup>5</sup>

J.R.P. Sclater observed concerning verses 10-11 in Psalm 2, “A still and awed reflectiveness pervades them. Men are called on to be **wise**; and wisdom involves teachableness, particularly on the part of leaders; willingness to put every faculty at God’s disposal (cf. Luke 22:27, “I am among you as he that serveth”); gladness with awe that right has might; and public acknowledgment of allegiance to the true king.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Leslie S. M’Caw and J.A. Motyer (1978) Psalms in *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*; Donald Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), p. 452.

<sup>2</sup>F. Delitzsch (1866-91, reprint ed. 2001) *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5, Psalms; C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, p. 57. <sup>3</sup>F. Delitzsch, p. 57. <sup>4</sup>cf. F. Delitzsch, p. 57. <sup>5</sup>cf. F. Delitzsch, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>J.R.P. Sclater (1955) *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. IV; George Arthur Buttrick, ed. (New York & Nashville: Abingdon Press), pp. 25-26.